



## **Inheriting Sultan Baabullah's Footsteps: Inspirational Leadership Characters for a Generation of Achievers**

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**Abstract:** This research examines the paradox between the historical reverence of Sultan Baabullah as a National Hero and the lack of adequate theoretical analysis regarding the relevance of his leadership model in addressing the challenges of the 21st Century. Although his military and political achievements are widely acknowledged, the primary research gap lies in the necessity for an explicit formulation of why Baabullah's character, marked by ethical courage against foreign domination and multi-ethnic diplomacy, presents a leadership framework that is fundamentally more resilient and integrative compared to contemporary Indonesian leadership models. Employing a qualitative-interpretive approach (through historical reviews, literature analysis, and in-depth interviews), this study aims to formalize the Baabullah leadership model. This model is centered on the core values of ethical courage (integrity-based bravery) and pluralist unification (the merging of plural groups). The findings demonstrate that Baabullah's legacy constitutes a prototypical transformative leadership. He successfully aligned political authority with moral responsibility (in resisting colonialism) while simultaneously uniting ethnic and religious diversity. Theoretically, this model serves as a counter-narrative to leadership solely focused on power, emphasizing moral integrity and pluralistic competence as the foundation for sustainable leadership. The internalization of these values is expected to enrich the character education of the younger generation amidst global complexity.

**Keywords:** character building; ethical courage; resilient leadership; Sultan Baabullah

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengkaji paradoks antara penghormatan historis terhadap Sultan Baabullah sebagai Pahlawan Nasional dan kurangnya analisis teoretis yang memadai mengenai relevansi model kepemimpinannya dalam menghadapi tantangan abad ke-21. Meskipun prestasi militer dan politiknya diakui secara luas, kesenjangan penelitian utama terletak pada perlunya formulasi eksplisit tentang mengapa karakter Baabullah yang ditandai dengan keberanian etis melawan dominasi asing dan diplomasi multietnis menghadirkan kerangka kepemimpinan yang pada dasarnya lebih tangguh dan integratif dibandingkan dengan model kepemimpinan Indonesia kontemporer. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-interpretatif (melalui tinjauan sejarah, analisis literatur, dan wawancara mendalam), studi ini bertujuan untuk memformalkan model kepemimpinan Baabullah. Model ini berpusat pada nilai-nilai inti keberanian etis (keberanian berbasis integritas) dan penyatuan pluralis (penggabungan berbagai kelompok). Temuan menunjukkan bahwa warisan Baabullah merupakan prototipe kepemimpinan transformatif. Ia berhasil menyelaraskan otoritas politik dengan tanggung jawab moral (dalam melawan kolonialisme) sekaligus menyatukan keragaman etnis dan agama. Secara teoritis, model ini berfungsi sebagai narasi tandingan terhadap kepemimpinan yang semata-mata berfokus pada kekuasaan, menekankan integritas moral dan kompetensi pluralistik sebagai fondasi kepemimpinan yang berkelanjutan. Internalisasi nilai-nilai ini diharapkan dapat memperkaya pendidikan karakter generasi muda di tengah kompleksitas global.

**Kata Kunci:** keberanian etis; kepemimpinan tangguh; pembentukan karakter; Sultan Baabullah



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## Introduction

The crisis of exemplary national leadership with integrity is a crucial issue in the development of national character today. In responding to this challenge, historical narratives are often used as references, but the interpretation of the figure of Sultan Baabullah (1528-1583) has experienced a serious reduction in meaning. Although he is recognized as a symbol of anti-colonial sovereignty in Southeast Asia who successfully expelled the Portuguese, the historical construction of him remains trapped in the glorification of military aspects and power politics alone. This approach leaves a fundamental problem: soft skill values such as moral integrity, inclusive diplomacy, and ethical leadership that are the main enablers of his success are neglected. The inability of existing literature to extract character values from Baabullah's war narrative has dulled its great potential as a model for character education. Therefore, this research is urgently needed to reconstruct Baabullah's narrative not merely as a warlord, but as a source of ethical values that align with the needs of contemporary character education.

A review of previous literature reveals a significant analytical gap. Classical and contemporary studies on Ternate, such as those by Amal (2010; Andaya, 1993), have largely focused on reconstructing the chronology of the war, the dynamics of the spice trade, and the political structure of the sultanate. Meanwhile, more modern studies tend to highlight aspects of Islamization or maritime geopolitics. No research has specifically formulated Babullah's leadership using a leadership psychology or character education framework. This differs from figures like Prince Diponegoro or Soedirman, who have been extensively studied from the perspective of struggle values. The novelty offered by this research is the shift in focus from the historiography of events to the construction of a pedagogical model. This research fills this gap by offering a new theoretical framework in the form of Ethical Courage (courage with integrity) and Pluralist Unification (pluralist unification) as the core of Babullah's leadership, a concept untouched by previous historical studies..

Departing from this theoretical vacuum, this study aims to construct and validate a transformative leadership model based on the values of Sultan Baabullah. The academic urgency of this research lies in its effort to provide a counter-narrative to the currently dominant transactional leadership model, by offering a leadership prototype based on historically proven maritime local wisdom. Practically, the results of this study are expected to contribute significantly to enriching the treasure trove of History-Based Character Education in Indonesia, providing an exemplary model that is not only relevant to the local context of North Maluku, but can also be adopted nationally as a foundation for sustainable leadership that is resilient and respects diversity.

## Research methods

This research applies the Historical Method to reconstruct and critically analyze the leadership of Sultan Baabullah. This approach was chosen because the objects of study are events and figures from the past that require factual verification and contextual interpretation, in contrast to case studies that generally examine contemporary phenomena. Referring to the methodological framework of Kuntowijoyo (2013) and Gottschalk (2006), the research procedure is carried out through systematic stages that include heuristics (source collection)

and verification (source criticism). In the Heuristic stage, data collection focuses on primary sources in the form of 16th-century colonial archives and sultanate manuscripts, as well as relevant secondary sources. The data is then validated through Source Criticism (verification), both external criticism to test the physical authenticity of documents and internal criticism to dissect the credibility of the content and mitigate the subjective bias of past chroniclers (Garraghan, 1946).

The next stage is Interpretation and Historiography. Unlike conventional narrative analysis, the interpretation stage in this study synthesizes facts to interpret the meaning behind the events, specifically extracting the values of Ethical Courage and Pluralist Unification from Baabullah's leadership maneuvers (Sjamsuddin, 2007). The analysis is conducted by connecting historical facts with modern leadership concepts to find their relevance. This process culminates in the Historiography stage, namely the rewriting of history that is not merely descriptive chronological, but also analytical and prescriptive. The final result is a construction of a transformative leadership model based on history formulated as a conceptual foundation for character education, addressing the need for exemplary figures rooted in the local wisdom of the archipelago.

## Research Results

### Identifying Sultan Baabullah's Character Values

Studies of Sultan Baabullah's (1528–1583) leadership should not be limited to tales of military heroism, but rather should be seen as a prototype of transformative leadership that emerged amidst the political turmoil of 16th-century Maluku. This region was at the center of the struggle for hegemony between Ternate and Tidore, further complicated by the intervention of foreign powers such as the Portuguese, Spanish, and the prospect of Dutch East India Company (VOC) intervention. Thus, claims about Baabullah's religiosity, integrity, and courage are not mere myths, but rather political decisions grounded in moral responsibility (Mus et al., 2014). The leadership model he produced successfully aligned political authority with anti-colonial ethics and united ethnic coalitions, laying the foundation for sustainable leadership.

The fundamental value that defines Baabullah's leadership is Ethical Courage. This value goes beyond combat prowess, rooted in a firm moral principle to challenge Portuguese military superiority after the death of Sultan Khairun. This moral integrity is supported by Baabullah's sense of responsibility to uphold justice, defend Islamic values, and the dignity of his people above short-term political interests (Dinda & Aman, 2020). The military loyalty he earned (such as the Kapita Laut Derwis) reflects this integrity. Firman Sjah of the Nusantara Palace Silaturahmi Forum also emphasized that Baabullah's "complete" character, including religiosity and patriotism, is highly relevant as material for contemporary character education (Muhani Marwa, Interview, August 10, 2025).

Baabullah's character was also marked by extraordinary Pluralistic Competence and Strategic Vision. The multi-ethnic diplomacy he developed, embodied in the nickname "Ruler of 72 Islands," was a clever effort to build a strong coalition, especially in the face of competition with Tidore and Spanish pressure from the Philippines. By successfully integrating ethnic and religious diversity under the umbrella of Ternate's sovereignty, Baabullah ensured the resilience of his region. Guru H. Umra Kapita highlighted that Baabullah's wisdom in decision-making and his responsibility to the people reflected a long-term vision essential for a contemporary leader (Guru H. Umra Kapita, Interview, August 12, 2025). This strategy, which combined military strength with political acumen, made Ternate a respected center of civilization.

The findings of these values are reinforced by contemporary academic studies. Mus et al. (2014) identified Baabullah's biography as an effective medium for instilling macro-values of patriotism and nationalism. Meanwhile, Dinda & Aman (2020) detailed the micro-dimensions, such as honesty, tolerance, discipline, and creativity, evident in his anti-Portuguese struggle. This synergy of views strengthens the argument that Baabullah's story is a laboratory for character education that combines tenacity with moral-spiritual values. The formalization of this leadership model serves as a theoretical counter-narrative to leadership practices that are solely oriented towards power, placing moral integrity and pluralistic competence as the foundation for sustainable leadership.

Although the research is grounded in critical historical analysis, the model's values have strong relevance in the modern context. Education experts (Muhani Marwa, Livi Atman) agree that Baabullah's character (courage, intelligence, and national spirit) is strategic to instill in the era of globalization (Interview with Nur Afni S., August 12, 2025). The flexibility of the Independent Curriculum, particularly through Project-Based Learning (PjBL), provides an ideal channel for implementing this local history. The response of students (Dhiya Adillah Butsaina R. Gogos), who see Baabullah's values of responsibility and decisiveness as relevant to everyday life, demonstrates the model's appeal. In conclusion, the Baabullah Transformative Leadership Model has great potential as a core element of national character education, teaching that sovereignty and progress are born from a combination of strength, integrity, and sincere devotion..

### **Development of History Learning Materials Based on Character Values**

Developing history learning materials that focus on noble character values is a strategic step to overcome the boredom of learning, which has been dominated by memorization. This paradigm shift positions history not simply as a series of facts, but as a heroic narrative that serves as an effective medium for shaping the personality and moral capital of the younger generation. The integration of core values such as patriotism, unity, and perseverance must be carried out thematically within learning units. This approach is reinforced by studies demonstrating its effectiveness, such as Jumardi & Pradita (2017) research on local history learning in Jakarta, which demonstrated that local history can serve as a valuable reference for developing students' character contextually. This innovation aligns with the spirit of the Independent Curriculum, which demands more relevant and meaningful learning.

While the idea of integrating noble values is fresh and relevant to the Independent Curriculum, there is a significant risk of "didacticizing history," which removes critical nuances, reducing it to mere moral lessons. To avoid reducing history to memorizing values, the pedagogical approach must shift from a focus on what happened to how and why. For example, in studying Sultan Babullah, it is important to not only highlight his courage but also open up space for critical discussion about controversies such as war strategy, early relations with the Portuguese before the conflict, and the dimensions of diplomacy with other sultanates (Marwa & Kapita). This requires teachers to facilitate debate and exploration of moral dilemmas, rather than simply narrating monolithic examples..

To address this challenge, the authors must offer a more critical pedagogical model, namely through the Historical Thinking Skills approach (Nurjana, 2020). This model allows students to engage in contextual activities such as Project Based Learning (PjBL) through visits to historical sites (e.g., Kastela Fortress or the Ternate Sultanate Museum), as suggested by Muhani Marwa and H. Umra Kapita. However, the PjBL must be designed to train students to analyze primary sources, identify narrative bias, and construct arguments based on historical evidence, rather than simply memorizing grades. By packaging the material in the

form of collaborative projects, such as creating historical comics or critical dramas, students can hone their creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving while examining the complexities of history.

The implementation of this critical approach faces significant obstacles, including limited human resources (HR) and limited teaching materials (Marwa). Not all teachers are accustomed to facilitating critical discussions or have access to non-conventional sources such as manuscripts or local documentaries. To address this, a structured, specialized teaching module is needed, focusing on Sultan Baabullah's leadership character, but designed using the Historical Thinking Skills framework. This module should serve as a guide for teachers to encourage students to connect leadership values (courage, integrity, responsibility) with contemporary challenges, such as resisting bullying or innovation, so that Baabullah's history truly becomes a practical and contextual tool for students (Tari & Rosana, 2019).

Verall, developing historical learning materials based on character values is a necessity in modern education, but it must be implemented within a critical pedagogical framework. Academics (Ahmad & Radjilun, 2021; Nurjana, 2020) and students (Rendy Gerald Bahrun) agree that history should be a 'laboratory for character formation,' where figures like Sultan Baabullah serve as a reflection of complex noble values. Teachers must shift to facilitators, encouraging students not only to emulate but also to critique and understand historical narratives in their entirety, including their controversies. The success of internalizing values is not measured by memorizing facts, but by changes in students' attitudes and behaviors based on mature and responsible historical thinking.

### **Improving Students' Understanding of Local History**

Integrating historical values into the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) is a strategic step to overcome rote learning, but this carries the risk of historical didacticism, reducing complex history to simple "moral lessons." The history of Sultan Baabullah is not monolithic, as it involves controversial war strategies, complex diplomatic relations with the Portuguese, and internal rivalries with Tidore. Without presenting this critical context, learning has the potential to fail to train students' reasoning skills. Therefore, the paradigm must shift from viewing history as merely a heroic narrative to a platform for developing Historical Thinking Skills, where students are taught to analyze moral dilemmas and the complexities of characters. Studies (Jumardi & Pradita, 2017) support the effectiveness of local history, provided it is supported by a pedagogical framework that promotes in-depth analysis.

To mitigate the risk of historical reduction, the implemented learning model must encourage critical exploration. The Project-Based Learning (PjBL) method suggested by educator Muhani Marwa can be effective if it is directed at exploring the critical nuances of Babullah's leadership. PjBL should engage students in contextual activities that require Source Criticism, for example comparing local archives of the Sultanate with Portuguese colonial records. The goal goes beyond producing creative output (such as a short film); it aims to engage students in debates about Babullah's moral dilemmas (for example, the controversy over severing diplomatic relations or coalition strategies). This approach, which utilizes a historical site (Bentala Kastela) as an object of analysis, ensures that character values (such as courage) are formed through rigorous historical reasoning, not just passive acceptance of values.

Although the critical pedagogy model offers great potential, the challenges of its implementation, especially at the school level, remain real. Limited human resources and the lack of innovative teaching materials (such as documentaries or curated digital sources) are

major obstacles to presenting history with a critical nuance (Muhani Marwa). Although understanding local history is strongly correlated with positive character development (H. Umra Kapita), its implementation requires a contextual and collaborative model. The hero's character must be linked to students' contemporary challenges (for example, the courage to innovate or resist bullying). Therefore, the development of a specific teaching module focused on Baabullah's character is urgent. This module should serve as a structured guide for teachers in implementing the Historical Thinking Skills method and facilitate students' critical engagement with history.

This shift to a critical perspective is supported by academic studies. Nurjana. (2020), Tari & Rosana (2019), and Ahmad & Radjilun (2021) agree that history must be positioned as an authentic source for instilling values through analysis, not simply a collection of facts. The role of teachers has also shifted to that of character-building facilitators and critical thinkers. They emphasize that Baabullah's biography should serve as a mirror of noble values (patriotism, religiosity, honesty) that need to be tested and verified by students themselves. By using history as a laboratory for critical character development, students not only emulate the macro value of patriotism (Mus et al., 2014) but also detail and analyze the micro values (honesty, discipline (Dinda & Aman, 2020) contained in Baabullah's complex strategic decisions.

Overall, the successful integration of Baabullah values into the Merdeka Curriculum relies heavily on the adoption of a critical pedagogical model. This model ensures students are able to analyze that Baabullah's sovereignty is the result of difficult and complex ethical negotiations, not simply a monolithic force. Student support (Rendy Gerald Bahrun) for innovative learning (film, drama) demonstrates the need for media that facilitates historical empathy and critical judgment. By eliminating historical reduction and focusing on developing Historical Thinking Skills—the ability to weigh evidence, identify bias, and contextualize events—Baabullah-based character education will significantly contribute to the formation of a strong self-identity, national commitment, and the ability to assess the moral complexities of contemporary leadership.

### **Strengthening Character Education in High School**

Character education is a systematic effort to instill moral and ethical values in students, particularly at the high school level, which is a crucial phase of transition to adulthood. Strengthening character aims to produce graduates who are not only academically intelligent but also possess integrity, responsibility, and a strong sense of social responsibility, making them a long-term investment for the nation. The Independent Curriculum plays a central role in this regard through its explicit emphasis on Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile, integrating dimensions such as faith, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical thinking, and creativity into every subject. This integration ensures that students do not simply memorize theory but also apply these noble values in their daily lives..

In their efforts to provide role models, schools and education offices, as highlighted by teachers H. Umra Kapita and Livi Atman, play a crucial role in introducing local figures and their leadership values, such as courage, justice, and local wisdom exemplified by Sultan Baabullah. However, strengthening character education often fails not because of a lack of historical role models, but because of rigid school evaluation systems that remain overly focused on cognitive academic achievement. When character values are not translated into measurable behavioral metrics and become merely a reporting formality, they fail to form a strong moral foundation. A shift in the focus of evaluation is needed from exam papers to observing actual behavior in the school and community environment.

Furthermore, it is worth criticizing that character education that focuses too much on the stories of individual heroic figures risks creating a cult of the individual, which is less aligned with the Indonesian national identity. This approach has the potential to ignore collective values that are far more essential in the social context, such as the mutual cooperation of the people of Ternate. Therefore, the emphasis must shift from the glorification of a single figure to the appreciation of deep-rooted communal values. Students like Adira Kafka, Nafeeza I. Ibrahim, and Amesti Hiannia A. have shown their support for innovative and collective methods, such as creating dramas, short videos, or collaborative local history projects that naturally instill the values of mutual cooperation and shared responsibility.

Character building also faces practical challenges such as limited time allocation and a lack of innovative teaching materials, as identified by Muhani Marwa, in addition to the strong negative currents of social media. To overcome these structural obstacles, innovative learning methods such as Project-Based Learning (PjBL), emphasized by Fathurrohman et al. (2017), have proven highly effective because through collaborative projects, students are trained to work together, solve problems, and take direct responsibility. Structural solutions not only include curriculum and method reforms, but also involve collaboration between the three pillars of education: school, family, and community, to create a harmonious environment that supports the implementation of digital and social ethics.

The success of character education can no longer be measured through written exams, but rather through tangible changes in attitudes and behavior reflected in students' daily lives. Success can be observed through active participation in activities that support noble values, such as student council (OSIS) or social activities, which demonstrate that these values have been internalized as part of character. By integrating local collective values, reforming the evaluation system to be more behavior-oriented, and utilizing innovative methods, schools can produce individuals who are not only intelligent but also possess strong morals and collective leadership, ensuring Indonesia has superior human resources with noble character.

### **History Based Learning Strategy Design for Teachers**

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Innovative learning strategies such as Project-Based Learning (PjBL) advocated by Fathurrohman et al. (2017), Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), and the use of technologies like Virtual Reality (VR) or Augmented Reality (AR) (Utari et al., 2021) are indeed appealing. However, the reality problem arises again: these strategies seem to only speak to urban contexts. Schools in remote areas with minimal facilities and technology face more fundamental structural obstacles, making high-tech approaches difficult to implement. Therefore, character education implementation strategies must be adaptive, emphasizing the use of local resources (such as nature and historical sites) and low-cost methods (such as inquiry discussions, role-playing simulations, and reflective writing) as proposed by (Az-Zahra et al., 2024) and Suprpto & Sulaeman (2022), to ensure relevance across all regions.

Regarding the assumption that history education is the solution to the leadership crisis (Livi Atman, 2025), this argument seems hyperbolic. History education is indeed crucial for instilling integrity and responsibility, but its contribution does not automatically resolve the modern political crisis, which is rooted in complex structural factors, such as corruption, oligarchy, and systemic inequality. This crisis requires systemic political and legal intervention, not just a moral foundation from history. Therefore, the focus of character education should be on equipping students with critical reasoning skills (as emphasized by Muhani Marwa), so that they are able to analyze the roots of these structural problems and become politically and socially conscious agents of change, rather than simply emulating the past.

### **Increasing the Relevance of the Independent Curriculum to Local Values**

The Independent Curriculum represents a crucial paradigm in contemporary education reform, prioritizing content relevance through the adaptation of local values. The inherent flexibility of KM provides educational institutions with broad discretion to contextualize teaching materials according to regional specifications and needs. The incorporation of local values (history, culture, and wisdom) serves as a bridging mechanism that links global knowledge with students' endogenous identities, a process philosophically congruent with the idea of holistic, learner-centered and culturally rooted education, thus strengthening the foundation for their identity formation.

Empirical evidence from various studies demonstrates the significant potential of KM implementation in integrating and preserving local values. For example, research by Taib, Oktaviani, & Rahardjo (2024) validated the effectiveness of this curriculum in the conservation of Moloku Kie Raha culture. Maharani & Jauhari (2024) further strengthened this finding by identifying coherence between local traditions (such as the Kirab Sesaji) and the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile (religious, social, and cultural). Furthermore, Annisha (2024) highlighted that contextualizing local wisdom in KM has implications for creating an inclusive, relevant, and meaningful learning environment, fundamentally strengthening the pillars of character education.

Within the framework of providing leadership role models (e.g., Sultan Baabullah, as highlighted by Kapita and Atman), methodological criticism is directed at the potential for an

approach that focuses too much on individual heroic narratives. This centrality to a single figure risks fostering a cult of the individual and neglecting more crucial communal values in the Indonesian social context, such as the principle of mutual cooperation. Therefore, the pedagogical imperative demands a shift in focus from the glorification of the singular to the internalization and appreciation of collective values deeply rooted in societal traditions.

The failure to substantially strengthen character is often due to structural barriers, particularly the rigidity of school evaluation systems that are still dominated by cognitive academic achievement assessments. Character scores tend to be relegated to reporting formalities when not translated into measurable behavioral metrics. A paradigm shift in evaluation is needed from paper-based tests to observing real behavior in social settings. Furthermore, students' preference for innovative methods (video, drama) that inherently encourage collective responsibility (Drakel & Bahrn) should be a primary consideration in assessment design.

The adoption of innovative learning strategies such as Project-Based Learning (Fathurrohman et al., 2017) and the use of high technology (Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality by Utari et al., 2021) face serious challenges in the form of urban bias. Implementing these high-tech approaches is difficult in remote schools with limited infrastructure. Therefore, character education implementation strategies must be adaptive and sustainable, prioritizing locally available resources and low-cost methods (such as inquiry and role-playing simulations by (Az-Zahra et al., 2024); Suprpto & Sulaeman,(2022) to ensure relevance across geographic contexts.

While KM offers the flexibility to integrate local values, this flexibility has the potential to backfire without strict control mechanisms and guidelines, leading to the symbolic or tokenistic implementation of local values. Furthermore, the claim that history education is the "solution to the leadership crisis" (Atman, 2025) should be viewed as hyperbolic. While history's contribution to integrity is significant, the solution to modern political crises is rooted in structural factors (corruption, oligarchy). The primary focus of education should be on fostering critical reasoning capacity (Muhani Marwa) so that students are able to analyze the structural roots of social problems.

A critical issue that could potentially hinder implementation is resistance from educators. Teachers lacking a strong historical foundation or lacking innovative pedagogical skills (PjBL, CTL) tend to revert to the traditional lecture model. The availability of adequate, specific modules and guides (Kapita & Atman) is an essential prerequisite for teachers willing to integrate local materials. Therefore, strategic investments should be focused on enhancing teachers' professional capacity through intensive training and developing collaborative networks with cultural/historical experts, transforming teachers into creative and credible facilitators.

### **Contribution to Historical Research and Character Education**

Research on Sultan Baabullah serves as a concrete role model, enabling students to emulate the values of leadership, courage, and sacrifice embodied in concrete actions. This research's contribution aligns with the spirit of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes contextual and values-based learning. The findings can be integrated directly into the curriculum to support the achievement of the Pancasila Student Profile, which aims to shape individuals who are faithful, have noble morals, think critically, and are proud of their national identity. This learning not only provides knowledge but also shapes students' character and identity holistically.

Increased student learning motivation has been shown to be positively correlated with personal engagement and contextualization of the historical material being taught. Didactic strategies that prioritize active experiences, such as interviews with key informants or direct visits to cultural heritage sites (e.g., Kastela Fortress), effectively transform the history learning process from a passive activity to a dynamic and relevant exploration. In the contemporary digital ecosystem, the use of digital-based primary sources in historical research is an essential means of internalizing character values. Through critical analysis of online historical documents or records, students are encouraged to develop critical reasoning skills, academic integrity, and methodological precision. This interaction, which transforms students from passive recipients of information into subjects of active exploration, contributes significantly to their personal development Suprpto & Sulaeman (2022).

To ensure the relevance and practical effectiveness of teaching materials, H. Umra Kapita recommends that the research and development process of learning modules be conducted through tripartite collaboration involving educators, students, and practitioners in the field. This participatory approach is essential to ensure that the constructed pedagogical model articulates with the specific characteristics and local cultural wisdom of students, thereby producing maximum educational impact. Although this implementation faces inherent obstacles such as limited time allocation and a deficit of instructional resources, these challenges can be overcome through creative interventions. Such strategies include the integration of materials across disciplines, the development of specific thematic modules, and the adoption of a project-based approach that effectively mitigates these obstacles. Livi Atman further emphasizes the imperative of long-term impact evaluation to validate the internalization of character values on an ongoing basis.

Claims regarding the contribution of Sultan Baabullah's research in "filling the historiographical void" caused by the dominance of Javanese-centric narratives require empirical verification. While the centralist bias in national historical narratives is a proven fact, this generalization does not automatically negate the existence of previous Baabullah studies and risks ignoring their contributions. Furthermore, the lack of critical discussion of colonial sources (Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch) represents a substantial historiographical weakness. Methodologically, these external sources are crucial for enriching the analysis, providing contrasting perspectives, and validating the reliability of local narratives. Therefore, comprehensive research must include colonial sources to strengthen its analytical basis, going beyond the mere advocacy of character education.

Overall, historical research on Sultan Babullah makes a substantial contribution to the development of character education. This contribution goes beyond simply adding knowledge; it presents a historically tested, concrete, and relevant role model. His biography serves as a repository of noble values that students can internalize, from courageous leadership to social concern. The synergistic involvement of various stakeholders, from teachers to parents, emphasizes that character education must be pursued as a collective effort, not solely the sole responsibility of schools. To translate the findings of this research into pedagogical practice, the development of practical modules or guides that can be directly used by teachers is essential, encompassing not only historical narratives but also empirical examples of the application of values in students' daily lives.

## **Conclusion**

This study concludes that Sultan Baabullah's narrative is an invaluable inspirational asset in character education, particularly for constructing students' leadership capabilities. His leadership values (courage, integrity, and responsibility) have been proven to be internalized

beyond the historical realm and are relevant for application in contemporary contexts. By designing integrated and contextual historical materials, this study successfully bridges the dichotomy between past heritage and present-day character formation, thus facilitating the effective implementation of the Independent Curriculum by utilizing local wisdom.

The research's tangible contribution is reflected in the formulation of innovative learning strategies, including pedagogical guidance for teachers and a project-based model. Overall, this study confirms that incorporating local historical figures into the curriculum is not merely content enrichment, but serves as a powerful instrument for developing resilient and virtuous leaders. These findings open up opportunities for replication and encourage educators to utilize cultural heritage as an essential resource for developing national character.

Nevertheless, this study explicitly acknowledges significant methodological limitations, including the lack of critical analysis of colonial sources and the potential bias resulting from contemporary interviews that tend to glorify figures. For future research, it is recommended to expand the scope of the study to more polemical areas, such as comparing Babullah's leadership with modern political figures or analyzing the relevance of these values in practical political dynamics, in order to produce a more in-depth and bold scholarly contribution.

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