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Recontextualizing Ethical Meanings in Sewaka Darma: A Ricoeurian Hermeneutic Approach to Contemporary Family Character Education

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ABSTRACT
Sewaka Darma is an Old Sundanese ethical text containing moral and pedagogical teachings concerning human conduct, speech, inner disposition, and the consequences of actions. Previous studies have identified moral, religious, social, and educational values in the manuscript; however, limited attention has been paid to the systematic interpretation and responsible recontextualization of its ethical meanings for contemporary family character education. This study aims to interpret the ethical meanings embedded in Sewaka Darma through Ricoeurian hermeneutics and explore their relevance to contemporary family character education. Employing a qualitative textual approach, the analysis involved three interconnected stages: semantic interpretation of primary textual evidence, reflective interpretation of recurring ethical patterns, and appropriation into contemporary educational contexts. The analysis focused on Old Sundanese passages concerning Dasa Sila, bodily and sensory regulation, speech and truthfulness, Hedap/Tineung, the consequences of conduct, and Bayu–Sabda–Hedap. The findings reveal six interconnected ethical patterns: attentiveness, ethical remembrance, self-regulation, responsible speech and conduct, awareness of consequences, and coherence between inner disposition and outward action. These patterns suggest that ethical teachings in Sewaka Darma emphasize the integration of moral understanding, self-regulation, and responsible conduct. Through Ricoeurian appropriation, these meanings offer a conceptual basis for family character education through dialogue, parental role modeling, reflective guidance, and habituation. This study contributes a textually grounded and historically sensitive interpretation of indigenous ethical heritage while acknowledging the distinction between the manuscript's historical pedagogical context and contemporary parenting practices.
Keywords: *Ricoeurian hermeneutics; ethical recontextualization; family character education; Old Sundanese manuscript; Sewaka Darma*

ABSTRAK
Sewaka Darma merupakan teks etika Sunda Kuno yang memuat ajaran moral dan pedagogis mengenai perilaku manusia, tutur kata, orientasi batin, serta konsekuensi tindakan. Penelitian terdahulu telah mengidentifikasi nilai-nilai moral, religius, sosial, dan pendidikan dalam naskah tersebut. Namun, kajian mengenai penafsiran sistematis dan rekontekstualisasi makna etisnya bagi pendidikan karakter keluarga kontemporer masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan menafsirkan makna etis dalam Sewaka Darma melalui hermeneutika Ricoeur dan mengkaji relevansinya bagi pendidikan karakter keluarga kontemporer. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif tekstual melalui tiga tahap analisis yang saling berkaitan, yaitu interpretasi semantik terhadap bukti tekstual primer, interpretasi reflektif terhadap pola etis yang berulang, dan apropriasi ke dalam konteks pendidikan kontemporer. Analisis difokuskan pada bagian teks yang membahas Dasa Sila, pengendalian tubuh dan indra, tutur kata dan kejujuran, Hedap/Tineung, konsekuensi perilaku, serta Bayu–Sabda–Hedap. Hasil penelitian mengidentifikasi enam pola etis yang saling berkaitan, yaitu perhatian etis, pengingatan ajaran moral, regulasi diri, tanggung jawab dalam bertutur dan bertindak, kesadaran terhadap konsekuensi tindakan, serta keselarasan antara orientasi batin dan perilaku nyata. Pola-pola tersebut menunjukkan bahwa ajaran etis dalam Sewaka Darma menekankan keterpaduan pemahaman moral, pengendalian diri, dan tindakan yang bertanggung jawab. Melalui apropriasi hermeneutika Ricoeur, makna tersebut dapat menjadi landasan konseptual bagi pendidikan karakter keluarga melalui dialog, keteladanan orang tua, bimbingan reflektif, dan pembiasaan. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemaknaan kembali warisan etika lokal yang berlandaskan bukti tekstual dan mempertimbangkan konteks historis, tanpa menyamakan konteks pedagogis naskah dengan praktik pengasuhan keluarga masa kini.
Kata kunci: Hermeneutika Ricoeur; rekontekstualisasi etis; pendidikan karakter keluarga; naskah Sunda Kuno; Sewaka Darma

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INTRODUCTION

The family constitutes a fundamental educational environment in which children first encounter ethical expectations, develop patterns of conduct, and learn to establish interpersonal relationships. As a primary context of moral socialization, the family plays a significant role in shaping children's understanding of appropriate behavior, personal responsibility, and relationships with others. Character education within the family is therefore not limited to the transmission of abstract moral values but is continuously constructed and reinforced through everyday interactions, dialogue, parental role modeling, guidance, and habituation. Previous studies have emphasized the central role of family relationships and parental modeling in children's character development (Pratomo & Herlambang, 2021; Wahyuni & Fitriani, 2022). From this perspective, character education requires attention not only to the values that families seek to cultivate but also to the cultural and ethical resources through which those values are understood, interpreted, and practiced. Recent studies similarly highlight parental modeling, communication, habituation, and collaboration as important mechanisms in family-based character education (Wulandari et al., 2020; Wati et al., 2024; Nursita & Sudiapermana, 2025; Kibtiyah et al., 2025). These perspectives suggest that meaningful character education involves an ongoing relationship between moral understanding, everyday practices, and the sociocultural contexts in which family interactions take place.

Indigenous textual traditions provide a potentially valuable source of ethical reflection and cultural knowledge that can enrich contemporary discussions of character education (Damanhuri et al., 2024; Apandie & Danial, 2019). Such traditions preserve historically situated understandings of human conduct, interpersonal responsibility, and moral obligations, offering opportunities to reconsider how ethical meanings may inform present educational concerns. Within the Sundanese cultural tradition, *Sewaka Darma* represents an important Old Sundanese text containing ethical and pedagogical teachings concerning human conduct, speech, bodily behavior, inner orientation, and the human journey. Previous scholarship has examined this text from various perspectives. Maryono (2018) explored teacher–student ethics alongside the religious and ethical teachings expressed in the manuscript.

Siswantara (2016) discussed virtues of life and the pedagogical implications of advice addressed to learners. Baharudin (2020) investigated moral values in relation to Sundanese society, while Marwah (2022) identified moral, religious, social, and cultural educational elements embedded in the text. Collectively, these studies establish *Sewaka Darma* as a significant source for understanding ethical and pedagogical meanings within the Old Sundanese intellectual tradition. More broadly, research on local-wisdom-based character education indicates that cultural resources can contribute to contextual character formation when their underlying meanings are interpreted and translated into relevant educational practices (Fajarini, 2014; Ernawati et al., 2018; Fauziah et al., 2020; Fitriyah et al., 2022; Ramdan & Muzakar, 2022; Rezkianah et al., 2020; Kusnadi, 2023; Parhan & Dwiputra, 2023; Yusuf, 2023). Nevertheless, the educational relevance of indigenous ethical traditions depends not merely on identifying their values but also on explaining how those

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values may be meaningfully understood within different historical and social contexts.

However, identifying ethical or educational values in a historical manuscript is not equivalent to explaining how its meanings can be responsibly interpreted and recontextualized for contemporary educational purposes. Historical texts emerge within particular linguistic, cultural, religious, and pedagogical horizons that shape the meanings conveyed through their teachings. Contemporary family character education, by contrast, operates within different social relationships, educational expectations, and institutional circumstances. Consequently, the movement from historical ethical teachings to contemporary educational applications requires a process of interpretation rather than the direct transfer of moral prescriptions. This distinction becomes particularly important when ethical teachings originally articulated within a teacher–student relationship are considered in relation to present-day parent–child interactions. Without sufficient attention to historical distance and contextual differences, the interpretation of indigenous texts risks reducing complex ethical meanings to generalized moral values or attributing contemporary educational purposes to texts that emerged under different historical conditions. A more systematic interpretive approach is therefore necessary to clarify which ethical meanings can be drawn from the text, how those meanings are established through textual evidence, and how they may be responsibly related to contemporary family character education.

Ricoeurian hermeneutics provides a relevant theoretical and methodological framework for addressing this interpretive challenge. Within this perspective, interpretation extends beyond the reconstruction of an author's original intention or the identification of explicitly stated moral teachings. It involves examining the semantic structure of the text, developing a reflective understanding of the meanings disclosed through textual interpretation, and considering how those meanings may be appropriated within the interpreter's contemporary horizon (Ricoeur, 1976, 1991, 2016; Tan et al., 2009; Susanto, 2016). The concept of appropriation is particularly relevant because it enables historical texts to enter into dialogue with contemporary concerns without eliminating the distance between their original contexts and present interpretations. Rather than treating historical ethical teachings as immediately applicable prescriptions, Ricoeurian interpretation encourages a reflective engagement with the possibilities of meaning opened by the text. In this study, such an approach provides an analytical basis for examining the ethical relationships among conduct, speech, inner disposition, self-regulation, and awareness of consequences in *Sewaka Darma*. It also offers a conceptual pathway for considering their relevance to family character education while acknowledging the distinctive pedagogical context of the manuscript. The methodological importance of maintaining a systematic relationship between textual evidence, interpretation, and appropriation has also been emphasized in qualitative research employing Ricoeurian hermeneutics (Tan et al., 2009).

Against this background, the research gap addressed in this study is primarily methodological and interpretive. Previous studies of *Sewaka Darma* have contributed to identifying its moral, religious, social, cultural, and educational values. However, the existing scholarship reviewed in this study has given comparatively limited

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attention to an explicit interpretive pathway that systematically connects primary Old Sundanese textual evidence, semantic interpretation, reflective understanding of recurring ethical patterns, and their responsible recontextualization within contemporary family character education. This distinction is important because identifying ethical values and reconstructing their contemporary educational significance represent different levels of scholarly inquiry. The former emphasizes the recognition and classification of moral content, whereas the latter requires an explanation of how textual meanings are interpreted, conceptually connected, and situated within a different educational context. Accordingly, the novelty of the present study does not rest on the assumption that *Sewaka Darma* historically functioned as a text for family character education. Instead, it lies in developing an explicit Ricoeurian interpretive pathway through which ethical meanings embedded in the manuscript can be examined and brought into a responsible conceptual dialogue with contemporary family education. Recent scholarship published in the *Journal of Moral and Civic Education* also demonstrates the relevance of connecting cultural resources, moral formation, and civic education while maintaining sensitivity to contemporary educational contexts (Damanhuri et al., 2024; Ernita & Suyato, 2026). Building on this broader scholarly discussion, the present study positions indigenous ethical heritage not as a collection of values to be transferred directly into modern educational practices, but as a source of meaning requiring historically informed interpretation and critical reflection.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research question: How can the ethical meanings expressed in *Sewaka Darma* be interpreted through Ricoeurian hermeneutics and responsibly recontextualized as resources for contemporary family character education? To answer this question, the study examines selected ethical teachings in the manuscript through interconnected processes of semantic interpretation, reflective interpretation, and appropriation. Its contribution lies in proposing a textually grounded and historically sensitive conceptual framework that connects Old Sundanese ethical heritage with contemporary family character education. By distinguishing textual interpretation from contemporary educational appropriation, the study seeks to contribute to discussions of moral and character education while avoiding the assumption that historical pedagogical teachings can be directly equated with modern parenting practices.

METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative textual research design grounded in Ricoeurian hermeneutics to examine and interpret ethical meanings expressed in *Sewaka Darma*. This approach was selected because the study sought not merely to identify moral values contained in a historical manuscript but also to examine how ethical meanings emerge through textual interpretation and how they may be responsibly recontextualized within contemporary family character education. The research therefore emphasized the relationship between textual expressions, interpretive understanding, and contemporary educational implications rather than the empirical measurement of character education practices or outcomes.

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The object of analysis was the textual tradition of *Sewaka Darma*, with particular attention to passages expressing ethical instruction concerning attentiveness, bodily and sensory conduct, speech, inner orientation, the consequences of human actions, and the relationship among *Bayu*, *Sabda*, and *Hedap*. These elements were examined as interconnected expressions of ethical understanding rather than as isolated moral prescriptions. The researcher served as the primary interpretive instrument, responsible for selecting relevant textual units, examining their semantic and contextual meanings, identifying recurring ethical patterns, and developing historically informed interpretations. Throughout the analytical process, a distinction was maintained between meanings supported by textual evidence and contemporary educational implications developed through hermeneutic appropriation.

Sources of Data

The principal textual source was Darsa's *Sewaka Darma, Peti Tiga Ciburuy Garut* (2012). A supporting textual edition was the transcription and translation published by Danasasmita, Ayatrohaedi, Wartini, and Darsa (1987). These sources provided the primary textual foundation for examining ethical expressions and their immediate linguistic and contextual meanings. The supporting edition was used to compare relevant textual expressions, clarify possible differences in transcription or translation, and support interpretations of passages selected for analysis.

Secondary scholarly sources were consulted to establish the historical and academic context of *Sewaka Darma* and to support theoretical discussions concerning Ricoeurian hermeneutics, ethical values, character education, and family education. These sources also informed the conceptual discussion of how ethical meanings originating in a historical pedagogical context may be considered in relation to contemporary educational concerns. Nevertheless, secondary literature was not treated as a substitute for primary textual evidence. The interpretation proceeded from the selected Old Sundanese passages toward broader ethical reflection and contemporary educational implications, rather than using textual quotations merely to illustrate theoretical conclusions established in advance.

Selection of Textual Evidence

Textual units were selected purposively according to their relevance to the research question and their explicit or contextual relationship to ethical instruction. Selection focused on passages that addressed ethical awareness, conduct, speech, inner orientation, consequences of actions, or recurring relationships among these elements. This purposive strategy enabled the analysis to concentrate on passages that provided a substantive basis for interpreting ethical meanings and examining their potential relevance to contemporary family character education.

The principal textual units included the opening pedagogical address to the learner, the invocation of *Dasa Sila*, passages concerning bodily and sensory conduct, statements relating to speech and truthfulness, expressions involving

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Hedap/Tineung and harmful dispositions, and passages connecting *tingkah*, *sabda*, *hedap*, and *rasa*. These units were examined in relation to their immediate textual contexts and, where relevant, compared with other selected passages to identify recurring ethical relationships.

The selection process emphasized the interpretive relevance of textual evidence rather than the frequency of particular words or expressions alone. Particular attention was given to whether a passage expressed an identifiable ethical relationship and whether its interpretation could be supported by the wording and context of the text. This approach was intended to reduce the risk of extracting isolated moral statements from the manuscript and interpreting them independently of their historical and pedagogical setting.

Ricoeurian Analytical Procedure

The analysis was organized into three interconnected interpretive movements: semantic interpretation, reflective interpretation, and appropriation or recontextualization. These movements were employed as an operational analytical framework informed by Ricoeurian hermeneutics, rather than as a claim that Ricoeur prescribed an identical three-stage research procedure. Together, they provided a systematic pathway from primary textual evidence to ethical interpretation and contemporary educational reflection.

First, semantic interpretation focused on the wording of selected Old Sundanese passages, their close English renderings, key lexical expressions, and immediate textual contexts. At this stage, the analysis sought to establish what the textual expressions conveyed before assigning broader ethical or educational significance to them. Attention was given to the relationship between particular expressions and their surrounding statements, including instructions concerning conduct, speech, inner disposition, and the consequences of actions. This movement provided the textual foundation for subsequent interpretation and helped distinguish meanings supported by the manuscript from concepts introduced through contemporary theoretical reflection.

Second, reflective interpretation examined recurring ethical relationships across the selected passages. Rather than treating an isolated expression as evidence of a complete contemporary moral theory, this stage considered how different textual units contributed to broader patterns of ethical understanding. The analysis explored relationships among attentiveness, ethical remembrance, self-regulation, responsible speech and conduct, awareness of consequences, and coherence between inner disposition and outward action. These patterns were developed through comparison and synthesis of interpreted passages, while maintaining attention to their original textual and pedagogical contexts. Reflective interpretation thus served to connect individual semantic observations with more integrated understandings of the ethical meanings expressed in *Sewaka Darma*.

Third, appropriation and recontextualization considered how the interpreted ethical meanings could enter into dialogue with contemporary family character education. Within Ricoeurian hermeneutics, appropriation involves engaging with

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the possibilities of meaning disclosed by a text while acknowledging the historical distance separating the text from its contemporary interpreter (Ricoeur, 2016). In this study, appropriation was undertaken by considering the broader ethical principles emerging from textual interpretation and examining their conceptual relevance to family-based educational practices, including dialogue, parental role modeling, reflective guidance, and habituation. This movement did not assume that the original teacher–student context of *Sewaka Darma* was equivalent to contemporary parent–child relationships. Instead, it sought to identify educational implications that could be formulated without disregarding the manuscript's historical and cultural particularities.

The relationship between textual interpretation and contemporary educational reflection is consistent with Ricoeur's broader hermeneutic concern with the relationship between texts, understanding, and human action (Ricoeur, 1991). Methodological discussions of Ricoeurian hermeneutics also emphasize the importance of making interpretive procedures sufficiently explicit and traceable within qualitative inquiry (Tan et al., 2009). Accordingly, the three analytical movements were treated as interconnected rather than mechanically separated stages. Semantic observations informed reflective interpretation, while proposed contemporary implications were considered in relation to the textual meanings from which they were derived. The analytical movements, guiding questions, procedures, and expected outputs are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Ricoeurian Analytical Movements

Analytical movement	Main question	Analytical operation	Output
Semantic interpretation	What does the textual expression convey within its immediate context?	Examine original wording, close translation, key lexical expressions, and contextual relationships.	Textually grounded ethical meaning.
Reflective interpretation	What recurring ethical patterns emerge across the selected passages?	Compare and synthesize ethical relationships identified through semantic interpretation.	Integrated reflective ethical patterns.
Appropriation and recontextualization	How can the interpreted meanings inform contemporary	Formulate contemporary educational implications while preserving	Conceptual implications for contemporary family

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	family character education?	historical and pedagogical distinctions.	character education.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was pursued through comparison of textual sources, interpretive traceability, and explicit attention to the distinction between historical textual meanings and contemporary educational implications. Comparison of the principal textual source with the supporting transcription and translation, together with relevant scholarly interpretations, was used to examine the consistency and contextual plausibility of selected textual expressions. In this textual research context, such comparison served to strengthen the evidential basis of interpretation rather than to establish statistical reliability or independent empirical confirmation.

Interpretive traceability was maintained by linking major analytical claims to identifiable textual passages before proceeding to reflective interpretation and contemporary appropriation. For each selected passage, the analysis recorded four interconnected elements: the original Old Sundanese wording, a close English rendering, the key lexical or contextual meaning, and the resulting interpretive implication. These elements provided a structured basis for examining how the analysis moved from textual evidence to broader ethical understanding.

A passage was retained for integrated interpretive synthesis when its proposed ethical relationship could be supported by at least one identifiable semantic observation and a corresponding reflective interpretation. Recurring ethical patterns were then examined across the selected passages to assess their conceptual coherence and textual grounding. Contemporary family character education implications were formulated as appropriation statements rather than as direct historical claims or empirically verified educational outcomes.

Particular attention was given to maintaining the distinction between the learner-oriented pedagogical discourse represented in *Sewaka Darma* and contemporary parent–child educational relationships. This distinction functioned as an interpretive safeguard against anachronistic readings and the uncritical transfer of historical ethical prescriptions into modern family practices. No separate expert-judgment or formal validation procedure is claimed in this study, as the available research record does not document a formal expert-selection protocol, validation instrument, or inter-rater agreement procedure. The credibility of the analysis therefore rests on the transparency of textual evidence, the coherence of interpretive reasoning, and the consistency between the selected passages and the conclusions drawn from them.

Textual Evidence Note

The Old Sundanese quotations used in this study were drawn from Darsa (2012) and compared with the transcription and translation published by Danasasmita et al. (1987), with Siswantara (2016) serving as an additional supporting scholarly source. Orthographic and transliteration variations may occur across textual editions. To preserve the historical and textual characteristics of the

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source material, the article retains the wording presented in the cited textual evidence rather than normalizing the expressions into modern Sundanese orthography. Where differences in wording or translation are relevant to the interpretation, they should be considered in relation to the cited editions and the immediate textual context.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Textual and Pedagogical Horizon of *Sewaka Darma*

The opening passages of *Sewaka Darma* establish a distinctive pedagogical horizon within which ethical teachings are communicated. The text describes the composition as a *kawih panyaraman* and identifies it as an instructional discourse intended for a learner who understands *sewaka darma*. The expression "Hawakaneun sang sisya/Nu huning sewaka darma" situates the discourse within a learner-oriented educational relationship (Darsa, 2012; Danasasmita et al., 1987). This textual evidence provides an important foundation for interpreting *Sewaka Darma* as a source of ethical and pedagogical instruction. Nevertheless, the historical position of the learner within the manuscript should not be equated directly with that of a child within contemporary family education.

This distinction is essential for understanding the interpretive orientation of the present study. The historical text represents a particular pedagogical, cultural, and ethical horizon, whereas contemporary family character education constitutes a different interpretive and educational context. The relationship between these contexts is therefore understood through recontextualization rather than historical equivalence. The pedagogical address in *Sewaka Darma* provides evidence of an instructional relationship concerned with ethical formation, but it does not independently establish the existence of contemporary parenting practices within the historical setting of the manuscript.

From a Ricoeurian hermeneutic perspective, this historical distance does not prevent the text from contributing to contemporary ethical reflection. Instead, it requires careful interpretation of the meanings disclosed through the text before considering their relevance to present educational concerns. Accordingly, the following analysis begins with the semantic and contextual meanings of selected passages, develops reflective interpretations of recurring ethical relationships, and subsequently considers their possible appropriation within contemporary family character education.

Dasa Sila: Listening, Remembrance, and Ethical Orientation

An important sequence of ethical instruction in *Sewaka Darma* begins with an address to the learner: "Anaking, mulah mo yat-yatna/Reungeu sabda sang pandita/Ingetkeun hayuwa lali, "followed by "Ingetkeun na dasa sila/Iseueuskeun na panca sakit/Iyan ta ningkahkeun raga" (Darsa, 2012, pp. 71–72; Danasasmita et al., 1987). In close interpretation, these expressions communicate an exhortation to remain attentive, listen to the teacher's instruction, remember ethical guidance, and direct bodily conduct accordingly. The passage presents an identifiable relationship among listening, remembrance, ethical instruction, and conduct.

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At the semantic level, the sequence suggests that ethical instruction is not presented merely as abstract knowledge. The learner is encouraged to listen attentively, retain the instruction, and relate it to practical conduct. The reference to *Dasa Sila* is particularly significant because it explicitly connects ethical guidance with the regulation of behavior. Rather than interpreting *Dasa Sila* as a complete contemporary model of character development, the present analysis considers its function within the immediate textual sequence. Its importance lies in the relationship between remembering ethical instruction and directing one's conduct.

At the reflective level, this relationship suggests that attentiveness and remembrance constitute important conditions for ethical orientation. Ethical guidance cannot meaningfully inform conduct when it is disregarded or forgotten. Conversely, remembering ethical instruction allows it to remain available as a reference when individuals encounter situations requiring judgment or action. This interpretation identifies a connection between ethical awareness and practical regulation without assuming that the manuscript articulates a modern psychological theory of moral development.

Through Ricoeurian appropriation, this ethical relationship can be brought into dialogue with contemporary family character education. Within family interactions, ethical attentiveness may be cultivated through repeated conversations, reminders, and opportunities for children to reflect on the relationship between moral guidance and everyday behavior. Parents may encourage children not only to remember particular rules but also to consider why those rules matter and how they relate to responsible action. Such an implication represents a contemporary interpretation of the relationship among attentiveness, remembrance, and conduct rather than a historical claim concerning parenting practices in *Sewaka Darma*.

From Ethical Rules to Embodied Self-Regulation

The ethical instruction in *Sewaka Darma* also addresses bodily conduct and its consequences. One passage states: “Suku milang awak urang/Lamun salah lengkah/Eta matak urang papa/Leungeun lamun salah cokot / Eta matak urang papa” (Darsa, 2012, pp. 77–78; Danasasmita et al., 1987). The passage associates improper bodily actions, including an inappropriate step or wrongful taking, with harmful consequences. The surrounding textual sequence extends this concern to other bodily and sensory capacities, including hearing, seeing, smelling, and eating or drinking.

The semantic significance of these expressions lies in the connection between bodily capacities and ethical responsibility. The body is represented not merely as a physical entity but also as a medium through which conduct is expressed and evaluated. Bodily actions may be directed appropriately or inappropriately, and their consequences become part of the ethical significance of human behavior. Accordingly, the passage supports an interpretation of embodied self-regulation in which individuals are expected to remain attentive to the ways their bodily capacities are exercised.

This interpretation does not require the reconstruction of a fixed modern taxonomy of sensory development or a psychological sequence connecting desire, thought, action, and moral value. Such formulations would introduce conceptual assumptions that are not directly established by the selected textual evidence.

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Instead, the passage more clearly supports an ethical relationship among bodily conduct, vigilance, and consequences. Self-regulation is therefore understood here as a reflective ethical pattern emerging from the interpretation of bodily instruction rather than as a modern psychological construct explicitly formulated in the manuscript.

Within contemporary family character education, this ethical pattern may inform guidance that encourages children to consider the consequences of their everyday actions. For example, parents may invite children to reflect on the implications of taking something without permission, acting carelessly, or engaging in behavior that affects other people. The educational emphasis is not limited to correcting inappropriate conduct but also includes helping children recognize the relationship between their actions and their responsibilities toward others. Such practices represent possible contemporary appropriations of the ethical meaning identified in the text, without implying that *Sewaka Darma* historically prescribed a modern theory of self-control or family education.

Speech, Truthfulness, and Moral Responsibility

The ethical significance of human conduct in *Sewaka Darma* extends beyond bodily actions to include speech and communication. The text states: "Manguni salah nu sabda / Lamun sabda teu tuhu / Lamun lain sabda jati / Lamuna hamo rahayu" (Darsa, 2012, pp. 78–79; Danasasmita et al., 1987). The passage associates problematic speech with expressions that are unreliable or untruthful and connects such speech with the absence of well-being. Its semantic emphasis therefore concerns the ethical responsibility attached to verbal expression.

Speech is not presented as an ethically neutral activity. Rather, what individuals communicate is connected with truthfulness, reliability, and consequences. The passage suggests that ethical responsibility includes attention to the quality and implications of spoken words. This interpretation becomes more significant when considered alongside other passages that connect conduct, speech, and inner orientation. Within this broader textual relationship, responsible communication involves more than politeness or conformity to social expectations; it concerns the ethical consistency of what individuals say and how they conduct themselves.

At the reflective level, the passage supports an understanding of speech as an expression of moral responsibility. Truthfulness becomes relevant not simply because it is a desirable personal characteristic but because communication influences relationships and the consequences of human interaction. Speech can contribute to trust and responsible relationships, while unreliable or misleading communication may undermine them. This broader educational interpretation is developed through reflection on the textual relationship between speech and consequences rather than through the assumption that the manuscript contains a complete contemporary theory of communication ethics.

In the context of family character education, these meanings may be appropriated through practices that encourage truthful communication, reflective discussion, and accountability for spoken words. Parents may use everyday interactions to invite children to consider whether a statement is accurate, whether it may harm another person, and what consequences might arise from communicating dishonestly. Such conversations can provide opportunities for children to connect

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ethical understanding with their communicative behavior. Nevertheless, these practices constitute contemporary educational implications derived through interpretation and should not be presented as direct descriptions of historical family pedagogy in *Sewaka Darma*.

***Hedap*, *Tineung*, Conduct, and the Inner Dimension of Character**

Another significant ethical dimension appears in passages addressing inner orientation and harmful dispositions. One passage states: "Lamun salah di kreti / Hala hedap hala tineung / Hiri dengki kasakalih / Makeya neluh ngaracun / Ngagunaan mijaheutan" (Darsa, 2012, pp. 79–80; Danasasmita et al., 1987). The passage connects wrongdoing with problematic inner orientations and refers to dispositions associated with envy, harmful intentions, and destructive actions. This textual relationship extends ethical concern beyond externally observable behavior toward the inner orientation accompanying human conduct.

At the semantic level, the expressions *Hedap* and *Tineung* require careful interpretation within their textual and linguistic contexts. They should not automatically be translated into fixed categories of modern psychology, such as motivation, emotion, or personality traits. Although such concepts may offer comparative perspectives, their direct application risks overlooking the historical and semantic particularities of the original expressions. The passage more clearly indicates that inner orientation has ethical significance, particularly when harmful dispositions are associated with harmful conduct.

Reflectively, this relationship suggests that ethical evaluation cannot be restricted to the visible dimensions of behavior. Understanding an action may also require consideration of the orientation, intention, or disposition associated with it. This does not mean that the text provides a comprehensive psychological account of intention. Rather, it reveals an ethical concern with the relationship between inward orientation and outward conduct. The interpretation therefore contributes to a broader understanding of character as involving both observable behavior and the ethical orientation underlying human action.

Through contemporary appropriation, this meaning can inform reflective guidance within family character education. Instead of responding exclusively to visible misconduct through correction or punishment, parents may encourage children to examine the intentions and circumstances associated with their actions. Questions concerning why an action was taken, what the child intended, and how that intention influenced the outcome may create opportunities for moral reflection. Such practices can help connect behavioral guidance with the development of ethical awareness. However, this contemporary implication remains an interpretive application of the textual meaning rather than evidence that *Sewaka Darma* historically advocated a particular modern parenting approach.

Ethical Coherence: *Tingkah*, *Sabda*, *Hedap*, and *Rasa*

The relationship between outward conduct and inner orientation becomes particularly evident in passages concerning *Bayu*, *Sabda*, and *Hedap*. The text states: "Lamun anggeus ditinggalkeun / Ku na bayu sabda hedap" (Darsa, 2012, pp. 82–83; Siswantara, 2016). In the supporting scholarly interpretation, *bayu*, *sabda*, and *hedap* are associated with force, speech, and intention. These expressions suggest a

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relationship among dimensions of human existence and action, although they should not be reduced to a fixed modern psychological classification.

A more explicit textual foundation for interpreting ethical coherence appears in the statement: "Tingkah tunggal sabda tunggal/Hedap tunggal rasa tunggal" (Darsa, 2012, p. 83; Siswantara, 2016). The supporting scholarly discussion interprets this expression as emphasizing unity between conduct and speech, as well as between inner commitment and feeling (Siswantara, 2016). The passage therefore provides a textual basis for examining the relationship between outward expression and inward orientation.

At the reflective level, the ethical significance of this relationship lies in the principle of coherence. Conduct and speech are not presented as entirely separate dimensions of ethical life, while inner orientation and feeling are also brought into a relationship of unity. This interpretation provides a basis for discussing integrity as consistency among different dimensions of human action and orientation. Rather than identifying character solely through isolated moral traits, the passage suggests that ethical life involves relationships among what individuals do, what they say, and what they inwardly hold.

In contemporary family character education, this principle has particular relevance to parental role modeling. Ethical instruction may become inconsistent when the values communicated verbally are contradicted by the conduct of the adults providing that instruction. For example, parents who encourage honesty while demonstrating dishonest behavior may communicate conflicting ethical expectations. Through appropriation, the textual emphasis on coherence can therefore inform an understanding of character education that integrates verbal guidance with consistent adult behavior.

This implication is compatible with contemporary discussions emphasizing the relationship between parental communication, modeling, and character formation (Wulandari et al., 2020; Nursita & Sudiapermana, 2025; Wati et al., 2024; Suherman, 2022). Nevertheless, the conceptual relationship established here remains interpretive. The study does not claim that *Sewaka Darma* historically formulated a contemporary parenting model. Instead, it identifies an ethical principle within the text that can be brought into dialogue with current understandings of family-based moral education.

Consequence Awareness as a Recurring Ethical Pattern

Across the selected passages, ethical conduct is repeatedly associated with consequences. Improper bodily actions are connected with *papa*, problematic speech is associated with the absence of *rahayu*, and harmful inner orientations are linked to destructive conduct and suffering. Although these expressions occur within different textual contexts, they collectively suggest that human actions are understood in relation to their ethical implications rather than as isolated behavioral events.

The recurrence of this relationship is significant because it connects several dimensions of ethical instruction. Bodily conduct, verbal expression, and inner orientation are not treated as unrelated concerns. Each is associated with the possibility of consequences, thereby reinforcing the importance of attentiveness and responsibility. At the reflective level, consequence awareness emerges as a recurring

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ethical pattern through which individuals may be encouraged to consider the implications of their actions.

This interpretation should not reduce the ethical teachings of *Sewaka Darma* to a simple reward-and-punishment framework. The selected passages do not independently establish a complete contemporary theory of behavioral consequences. Rather, they indicate that actions and orientations are ethically consequential. The broader reflective meaning concerns the importance of recognizing that conduct is connected with outcomes and that responsible action requires attention to what may follow from particular choices.

Within contemporary family character education, consequence awareness may be appropriated through reflective conversations that encourage children to anticipate the effects of their behavior. Parents may invite children to consider who could be affected by an action, what consequences might arise, and what alternative response would demonstrate greater responsibility. Such guidance can move beyond immediate behavioral correction toward opportunities for ethical reasoning. The resulting educational implication is therefore grounded in the interpreted relationship between conduct and consequences, while remaining distinct from the manuscript's historical pedagogical context.

An Integrated Ricoeurian Interpretation

When the selected textual units are interpreted together, several interconnected ethical patterns emerge. The opening pedagogical address establishes the importance of attentiveness and remembrance. The *Dasa Sila* sequence connects ethical remembrance with the direction of bodily conduct. Passages concerning bodily and sensory capacities emphasize the relationship between action, regulation, and consequences. Expressions concerning speech highlight truthfulness and communicative responsibility, while passages involving *Hedap* and *Tineung* draw attention to the ethical significance of inner orientation. Finally, the relationship among *tingkah*, *sabda*, *hedap*, and *rasa* provides a textual basis for interpreting ethical coherence.

These findings suggest that the ethical meanings of *Sewaka Darma* can be understood through relationships among attentiveness, ethical remembrance, self-regulation, responsible speech and conduct, consequence awareness, and ethical coherence. The six patterns are not presented as a formal historical model explicitly articulated in the manuscript. Instead, they constitute an integrated interpretive synthesis developed through semantic and reflective analysis of the selected passages.

This distinction is methodologically significant. The interpretation does not require the reconstruction of separate contemporary character-development models from historical ethical categories such as *Dasa Sila*, *Dasa Indria*, *Dasa Kalesa*, or *Bayu–Sabda–Hedap*. Rather, it identifies ethical relationships that can be supported through the available textual evidence. In this way, the analysis remains grounded in the manuscript while allowing broader ethical meanings to emerge through reflection.

The movement from textual evidence to contemporary educational implications is summarized in Table 2. The table illustrates how semantic interpretation provides the foundation for identifying reflective ethical patterns, which are subsequently

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considered in relation to family character education through Ricoeurian appropriation.

Table 2. Textual-to-Contextual Interpretation of Selected *Sewaka Darma* Passages

Textual evidence	Semantic meaning	Reflective ethical pattern	Contemporary family implication
"Reungeu sabda… Ingetkeun hayuwa lali"	Listening, remembering, and avoiding forgetfulness	Attentiveness and ethical remembrance	Dialogue and repeated ethical reminders
"Ingetkeun na dasa sila… ningkahkeun raga"	Remembering ethical instruction and directing bodily conduct	Self-regulation	Reflective guidance before taking action
"Lamun salah lengkah… salah cokot…"	Improper bodily conduct is associated with harmful consequences	Embodied responsibility	Discussing the effects of everyday actions
"Lamun sabda teu tuhu…"	Speech is associated with reliability and truthfulness	Responsible communication	Encouraging truthful family communication
"Hala hedap hala tineung…"	Harmful inner orientation is ethically consequential	Reflection on intention	Discussing intentions and reasons behind actions
"Tingkah tunggal sabda tunggal…"	Conduct and speech are associated with unity	Ethical coherence and integrity	Parental role modeling and consistency between words and actions

From Historical Pedagogy to Contemporary Family Education

Ricoeurian appropriation provides an interpretive basis for bringing the ethical meanings of Sewaka Darma into dialogue with contemporary family character education without eliminating the historical distance between the two contexts. The manuscript communicates ethical instruction within a historically situated teacher–student relationship, whereas contemporary family education primarily involves parent–child interactions and everyday familial relationships. Consequently, the interpretive movement should not be understood as a direct equivalence between teacher and parent or between historical learner and contemporary child.

Instead, recontextualization proceeds through the interpretation of historical ethical meanings, the identification of reflective ethical patterns, and the formulation of contemporary educational implications. This movement allows the manuscript to contribute to present ethical reflection without attributing modern educational practices to its original historical setting. The contemporary relevance of Sewaka

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Darma therefore rests on the interpretive possibilities of its ethical teachings rather than on an assumption of historical continuity in educational institutions or parenting practices.

Based on the integrated interpretation, four interrelated family character education practices may be considered. First, dialogue provides opportunities for parents and children to discuss ethical expectations, clarify the meaning of responsible conduct, and reflect on everyday moral situations. This practice is conceptually connected with the textual emphasis on listening, remembrance, and attentiveness.

Second, parental role modeling allows children to observe relationships between ethical instruction and actual behavior. The principle of coherence identified through the relationship among tingkah, sabda, hedap, and rasa provides a conceptual basis for emphasizing consistency between what parents communicate and what they demonstrate through their conduct.

Third, reflective guidance encourages children to consider their intentions, choices, and the consequences of their actions. This practice draws upon the interpreted relationships among inner orientation, bodily conduct, speech, and ethical consequences. Rather than emphasizing behavioral correction alone, reflective guidance provides opportunities for children to examine the ethical implications of their decisions.

Fourth, habituation offers a means of reinforcing ethical understanding through repeated everyday practices. The textual relationship between remembrance and conduct suggests that ethical guidance gains practical significance when it remains connected with action. Within contemporary family education, this principle may be interpreted as supporting consistent opportunities to practice responsible communication, self-regulation, and consideration for others.

These proposed practices are compatible with contemporary family character education literature emphasizing communication, parental modeling, habituation, and reflective guidance (Pratomo & Herlambang, 2021; Wahyuni & Fitriani, 2022; Abroto et al., 2022; Maharatu & Marzuki, 2026). Studies addressing local wisdom and family education also indicate that cultural resources may be connected with educational practices through contextual interpretation and adaptation (Makmur & Dastina, 2018; Rahmawati et al., 2023; Nurani et al., 2024; Mubarok & Rahmatulloh, 2020; Yusuf et al., 2024).

Nevertheless, these contemporary educational practices should not be understood as historically originating from Sewaka Darma. Their significance within this study lies in the conceptual dialogue established between the interpreted ethical meanings of the manuscript and contemporary understandings of family character education. Accordingly, the proposed implications remain interpretive and conceptual rather than empirically demonstrated educational interventions.

Dialogue with Contemporary Character Education Theory

The ethical patterns identified through the interpretation of Sewaka Darma can also be considered in relation to contemporary character education theory. Lickona's discussion of moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action provides a relevant comparative framework for examining the relationship between ethical understanding, inner orientation, and conduct (Lickona, 2015; Guntoro et al., 2024).

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The interpreted passages concerning remembrance, bodily conduct, speech, and inner disposition suggest relationships that can be discussed alongside these dimensions of character education.

However, the present study does not claim that Sewaka Darma historically anticipated or explicitly followed Lickona's theoretical model. Such a claim would risk projecting contemporary educational categories onto a historical text. Instead, Lickona's framework is introduced as a comparative conceptual perspective after the semantic and reflective interpretation of the manuscript has been established. This distinction enables the study to examine conceptual relationships without assuming theoretical identity between different historical and intellectual traditions.

Similarly, Mulyana's discussion of value education and Sanusi's value-system perspective offer comparative perspectives for understanding how ethical awareness, moral orientation, and responsible conduct may be related within broader educational processes (Mulyana, 2011; Sanusi, 2017). These theoretical perspectives can help articulate the contemporary educational significance of the interpreted findings, particularly concerning the relationship between moral understanding and practical behavior.

The direction of analysis nevertheless remains grounded in the text. The Old Sundanese passages provide the primary evidence, reflective interpretation establishes recurring ethical patterns, and contemporary educational theories offer a conceptual vocabulary for discussing their possible significance. This sequence is essential for preserving the methodological distinction between interpretation and theoretical comparison.

Without such a distinction, modern character education theories could function as predetermined categories through which the historical text is interpreted, potentially limiting the meanings that emerge from the manuscript itself. Ricoeurian hermeneutics instead allows the text to disclose its ethical relationships before these meanings are brought into dialogue with contemporary theoretical perspectives. The resulting contribution is therefore not an assertion of equivalence between Sewaka Darma and modern character education theory, but a historically sensitive interpretation of their possible conceptual relationships.

The Integrated Conceptual Model

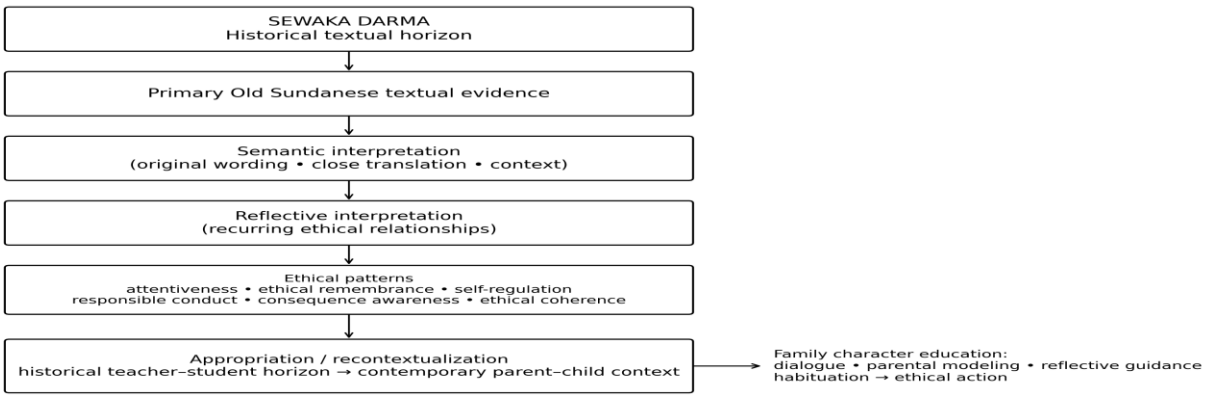


Figure 1. Ricoeurian Recontextualization from Textual Meaning to Contemporary Family Character Education

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The integrated conceptual model synthesizes the interpretive relationships developed throughout the analysis. It represents a researcher-constructed framework for understanding how ethical meanings identified in Sewaka Darma may be interpreted and recontextualized within contemporary family character education. The model is not presented as a historical educational framework explicitly formulated within the manuscript.

At the first analytical level, the model begins with selected Old Sundanese textual expressions concerning ethical instruction, bodily conduct, speech, inner orientation, and consequences. These expressions constitute the textual foundation of the analysis and are examined through semantic interpretation.

At the second level, reflective interpretation identifies recurring ethical patterns emerging from relationships among the selected passages. These patterns include attentiveness, ethical remembrance, self-regulation, responsible speech and conduct, consequence awareness, and ethical coherence. The patterns represent an integrated interpretation rather than independent historical categories established by the manuscript.

At the third level, Ricoeurian appropriation connects these interpreted ethical meanings with contemporary family character education. This movement produces conceptual implications concerning dialogue, parental role modeling, reflective guidance, and habituation. The transition between the historical and contemporary levels is understood as an interpretive process that preserves contextual differences while allowing ethical meanings to inform present educational reflection.

The model therefore illustrates a relationship between textual grounding, reflective ethical understanding, and contemporary educational appropriation. Its significance lies in making the interpretive movement explicit and traceable, rather than presenting contemporary educational practices as direct prescriptions originating from the historical text.

Theoretical Contribution and Implications

The principal theoretical contribution of this study lies in developing a text-to-context interpretive framework that connects indigenous ethical heritage with contemporary family character education through Ricoeurian hermeneutics. Unlike approaches that primarily identify and classify moral values in historical texts, the present study demonstrates how ethical meanings can be systematically interpreted, synthesized, and recontextualized without disregarding their original linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical contexts. The framework distinguishes three interconnected analytical levels: semantic interpretation of textual evidence, reflective interpretation of recurring ethical patterns, and appropriation into contemporary educational contexts.

This interpretive framework offers a methodological contribution by addressing two potential limitations in the contemporary interpretation of historical ethical texts. The first is an exclusively historical reading that confines the significance of a text to its original context without considering its possibilities for contemporary understanding. The second is a present-oriented interpretation that projects modern educational concepts onto historical expressions without adequately examining their original meanings. Ricoeurian appropriation provides an alternative

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interpretive position in which historical distance is preserved while contemporary educational significance is developed through critical reflection.

The integrated model proposed in this study should therefore be understood as a researcher-constructed conceptual framework rather than a historical educational model explicitly formulated in Sewaka Darma. Its significance lies in organizing recurring ethical relationships identified through textual interpretation into a coherent analytical structure. The six ethical patterns—attentiveness, ethical remembrance, self-regulation, responsible speech and conduct, consequence awareness, and ethical coherence—represent interconnected dimensions of ethical understanding rather than a fixed developmental sequence prescribed by the manuscript.

From an educational perspective, these interpreted patterns provide a conceptual basis for considering how indigenous ethical meanings may inform contemporary family character education. Dialogue, parental role modeling, reflective guidance, and habituation constitute possible educational practices through which ethical awareness, responsible conduct, and coherence between values and actions may be cultivated. These practices are not presented as historical prescriptions originating from Sewaka Darma, nor are they claimed to constitute an empirically validated parenting model. Instead, they represent contemporary educational implications developed through the appropriation of ethical meanings identified in the manuscript.

The findings contribute to broader discussions of moral and civic education by demonstrating how cultural and textual traditions may serve as resources for ethical reflection without being reduced to collections of moral prescriptions. This perspective is consistent with scholarship emphasizing the relationship between cultural resources, moral formation, and contextual educational interpretation (Apandie & Danial, 2019; Damanhuri et al., 2024). Accordingly, the study offers a conceptual contribution to family character education while also providing an interpretive approach that may inform future research on the educational relevance of indigenous ethical heritage.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the analysis is based on selected passages of Sewaka Darma and therefore does not provide an exhaustive interpretation of the entire manuscript or the broader tradition of Old Sundanese ethical thought. Although the selected passages offer a textual basis for identifying recurring ethical relationships, other sections of the manuscript may contain additional meanings that warrant further examination.

Second, the study employs a qualitative textual approach and does not investigate how contemporary families understand, negotiate, or implement the ethical principles identified through interpretation. Consequently, the proposed implications for family character education remain conceptual rather than empirically demonstrated. The study also does not assess whether the proposed practices produce measurable changes in children's ethical understanding, attitudes, or behavior.

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Future research may extend these findings through qualitative investigations of parent–child interactions, culturally responsive character education practices, and the interpretation of indigenous ethical resources within contemporary family settings. Comparative textual studies involving other Old Sundanese manuscripts may also provide opportunities to examine the similarities and differences among ethical traditions. Furthermore, empirical research involving parents and children could explore the practical relevance, contextual suitability, and educational effectiveness of the proposed conceptual implications.
Such investigations would extend the contribution of the present study by examining how historically grounded ethical interpretations may be translated into educational experiences while maintaining sensitivity to cultural context and contemporary family relationships.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the ethical meanings embedded in *Sewaka Darma* can be systematically interpreted and responsibly recontextualized as conceptual resources for contemporary family character education through Ricoeurian hermeneutics. The analysis reveals that the manuscript's ethical teachings extend beyond the identification of individual moral values, emphasizing interconnected relationships among ethical awareness, self-regulation, responsible conduct, and coherence between inner orientation and outward action. These relationships indicate that ethical formation involves not only understanding moral guidance but also maintaining consistency between what individuals recognize as ethically appropriate and how they act. By distinguishing semantic interpretation, reflective interpretation, and appropriation, the study establishes an interpretive pathway through which historically situated ethical meanings can be understood in relation to contemporary educational concerns.

The recontextualization of these meanings suggests that indigenous ethical heritage can contribute to family character education by providing a conceptual foundation for dialogue, parental role modeling, reflective guidance, and habituation. These educational implications emphasize the importance of connecting moral understanding with everyday interactions and consistent behavior within the family. However, the proposed framework does not assume that *Sewaka Darma* historically functioned as a family education text or that its original teacher–student relationship corresponds directly to contemporary parent–child interactions. Instead, its educational relevance emerges through a reflective process that acknowledges historical differences while exploring the contemporary significance of the ethical relationships expressed in the manuscript.

The principal contribution of this study lies in offering a textually grounded and historically sensitive interpretive framework for connecting Old Sundanese ethical heritage with contemporary moral and character education. Rather than proposing a historically established or empirically validated parenting model, the study demonstrates how Ricoeurian hermeneutics can facilitate a responsible dialogue between indigenous textual traditions and contemporary educational perspectives. This contribution provides a conceptual basis for further investigation into the educational relevance of indigenous ethical resources. Future research may

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examine how the proposed principles are understood, adapted, and practiced within contemporary family settings, including their potential contribution to children's ethical reflection and character development.

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