



The Construct of Ethical Intelligence: The Myth of “Pamali” in the Religiosity of the Kampung Naga Indigenous Community

Nani Widiawati^{1*}, Maesaroh Lubis²

¹ Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University, Indonesia

² Muhammadiyah Tasikmalaya University, Indonesia

email: nani.widiawati@uinsgd.ac.id¹

Article Info :

Received:

07-07-2025

Revised:

14-07-2025

Accepted:

21-07-2026

Abstract

The controversy surrounding myths has generated theoretical and practical debates, particularly regarding their relationship with religious values and systems of belief. Religions based on sacred texts often position myths as superstitious elements that should be abandoned, while anthropological perspectives recognize myths as cultural mechanisms that communicate moral values, regulate behaviour, and preserve collective identity. This study examines the pamali tradition maintained by the Muslim indigenous community of Kampung Naga as a representation of myth within a religious context. Employing a philosophical-ethnographic approach with descriptive analysis, this research aims to describe the forms and expressions of the pamali myth, analyze the construction of ethical intelligence embedded within pamali, and examine its function as an ethical norm in the religiosity of the Kampung Naga community. The findings reveal that pamali operates as an explicit cultural expression containing ethical messages related to personal conduct, social relationships, environmental responsibility, and spiritual awareness. The study identifies four interconnected dimensions of ethical intelligence, namely personal ethics, social ethics, natural ethics, and religious ethics, which collectively construct a moral framework guiding community life. These findings emphasize that indigenous myths can serve as meaningful ethical resources that connect cultural heritage, religious values, and sustainable social practices.

Keywords: *Ethical Intelligence, Indigenous Community, Kampung Naga, Pamali Myths, Religiosity.*



©2022 Authors.. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License.
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary discourse on indigenous knowledge has shifted substantially from viewing local traditions as remnants of pre-modern societies toward recognizing them as dynamic epistemic systems that contribute to ethical reasoning, environmental sustainability, cultural resilience, and community identity within an increasingly globalized world. Indigenous communities are now acknowledged as possessing culturally embedded knowledge capable of responding to complex social and ecological challenges through locally constructed systems of values and norms that have evolved across generations (Firnadi, 2025). International scholarship has increasingly emphasized that indigenous wisdom should be interpreted not merely as cultural heritage but as an intellectual resource capable of informing contemporary debates on sustainability, education, and moral development (Halim et al., 2025). Within this broader context, Kampung Naga in Tasikmalaya Regency, West Java, represents one of Indonesia's most enduring indigenous communities, maintaining a distinctive cultural identity despite its close proximity to modern educational institutions, urban administrative centers, and one of the strongest Islamic educational environments in the country. The community's remarkable persistence illustrates that indigenous traditions do not necessarily diminish under the pressure of modernization but instead continuously negotiate with religious beliefs, educational transformation, and scientific rationality through culturally meaningful mechanisms. Among these mechanisms, the myth of *pamali* occupies a particularly central position because it regulates everyday conduct, shapes collective morality, and mediates the relationship between ancestral authority, communal responsibility, and religious consciousness (Harashani, 2018). Rather than functioning solely as a collection of prohibitions, *pamali* constitutes a sophisticated ethical discourse whose intellectual significance

remains insufficiently examined within contemporary social science, language, and education scholarship.

The existence of Kampung Naga has consequently attracted sustained scholarly attention from multiple disciplinary perspectives, producing an increasingly diverse body of literature concerning its cultural, ecological, educational, architectural, and religious characteristics. Research has consistently demonstrated that traditional leadership plays a decisive role in preserving local wisdom by maintaining customary institutions that regulate social order and transmit ancestral values across generations (Musthofa & Setiajid, 2021). Studies of Kampung Naga have further illustrated that indigenous traditions shape socioeconomic life through locally embedded systems of cooperation and cultural adaptation that remain resilient amid globalization (Harashani, 2018). Environmental scholars have argued that the community's customary practices contribute significantly to sustainable environmental management and ecological conservation through culturally grounded mechanisms of resource governance (Mulyanie et al., 2023). Similar findings reveal that local wisdom in traditional villages across West Java also functions as an effective framework for disaster mitigation, demonstrating that indigenous ethical principles frequently possess practical implications beyond symbolic cultural expressions (Darmawan et al., 2022). Educational investigations likewise indicate that Kampung Naga serves as a medium for transmitting religious and cultural values through artistic practices, intergenerational learning, and indigenous educational systems that integrate Islamic teachings with Sundanese traditions (Gunara et al., 2019). Although this expanding scholarship successfully establishes Kampung Naga as an important site for interdisciplinary inquiry, most existing studies continue to emphasize observable cultural manifestations while paying comparatively limited attention to the philosophical structure that enables mythical narratives such as *pamali* to function as enduring ethical knowledge.

This imbalance becomes particularly evident in studies specifically addressing *pamali*, which predominantly interpret the tradition as ecological wisdom, educational material, cultural identity, or a communicative instrument for transmitting local values without sufficiently examining its underlying ethical construction. Existing research demonstrates that *pamali* contains ecological values capable of strengthening environmental awareness and character education among younger generations (Gustiana & Supriatna, 2021). Recent educational analyses similarly conclude that prohibition traditions in Kampung Naga cultivate character formation through the internalization of socially accepted moral values rather than through formal institutional instruction (Hamdani & Kumalasari, 2025). Studies concerning Islam and Kampung Naga have also revealed that local traditions should not automatically be interpreted as religious deviation because they reflect a productive interaction between Islamic teachings and inherited local wisdom within the framework of lived religion (Darmalaksana et al., 2022). Parallel discussions on Sundanese culture likewise argue that the dialectical relationship between *pamali* and Islamic values demonstrates the adaptability of religious ethics within indigenous cultural contexts rather than an unavoidable conflict between faith and tradition (Qusyaeri & Azhari, 2019). Broader discussions concerning Islam Nusantara further reinforce the argument that customary values may strengthen religious piety by embedding theological principles within culturally meaningful practices that remain socially legitimate (Muslim, 2020). Despite these valuable contributions, the literature has not yet conceptualized *pamali* as an integrated construct of ethical intelligence that simultaneously explains how mythical narratives transform into systems of moral reasoning, religious consciousness, and collective behavioral regulation, leaving a significant conceptual gap at the intersection of mythology, ethics, and religiosity that warrants further investigation.

The absence of an integrated ethical perspective has important implications because myths have historically functioned not merely as irrational narratives but as symbolic systems through which societies formulate moral obligations, preserve collective memory, and regulate patterns of social interaction across generations. Classical anthropological scholarship explains that myths derive their social authority from their capacity to legitimize moral rules and sustain ritual practices that organize communal life rather than from empirical verifiability alone (Malinowski, 1954). Phenomenological approaches likewise argue that myths possess existential significance because they articulate fundamental human experiences and therefore cannot be reduced to fictional stories without disregarding their cultural function in shaping meaning and identity (Dhavamony, 1995). Religious studies further demonstrate that myths continuously evolve into dynamic realities in which symbolic imagination becomes an effective medium for communicating ethical, political, and spiritual values

within particular cultural contexts (Roibin, 2010). From the perspective of Islamic ethics, moral conduct is fundamentally directed toward the realization of virtue through the integration of belief, intention, and righteous action, indicating that ethical intelligence should be understood as the capacity to internalize moral principles into everyday behavior rather than merely to distinguish between right and wrong (Ayyub, 1994). This perspective becomes increasingly relevant because the ethical content embedded within *pamali* may provide a conceptual bridge between culturally inherited moral traditions and universal ethical reasoning, offering an alternative framework for understanding indigenous religiosity beyond the conventional dichotomy of rationality versus superstition.

The scientific relevance of this issue becomes even more compelling when Kampung Naga is viewed as a religious indigenous community whose cultural continuity has been maintained despite intensive interaction with Islamic education, formal schooling, tourism, and modernization. Previous investigations have shown that education within Kampung Naga is continuously negotiated with local cultural values so that educational development strengthens community capacity without eliminating indigenous identity (Nasir et al., 2020). Studies on Sundanese educational traditions similarly indicate that indigenous communities preserve ethical norms through informal cultural transmission, allowing customary knowledge to remain influential despite the expansion of modern educational institutions (Ningrum, 2016). Family-based cultural practices in Sundanese society also reveal that moral values are primarily transmitted through everyday interactions in which prohibitions, advice, and symbolic expressions become effective instruments of ethical socialization from childhood (Rachmawati, 2017). Within Islamic theology, moral ideals are inseparable from the pursuit of human virtue and ultimate salvation, suggesting that culturally embedded ethical systems may resonate with broader religious conceptions of goodness when interpreted through their substantive values rather than their literal mythical forms (Al Baqi, 1945). Positioning *pamali* within the framework of ethical intelligence therefore offers a new analytical direction capable of explaining why mythical prohibitions continue to regulate communal behavior even in a society deeply influenced by Islamic religiosity, modern education, and scientific knowledge, while simultaneously enriching interdisciplinary discussions across social sciences, language, religious studies, and indigenous education.

This study departs from previous scholarship by examining the myth of *pamali* not merely as folklore, ecological wisdom, educational material, or cultural heritage, but as an integrated construct of ethical intelligence manifested within the religiosity of the Kampung Naga indigenous community. Rather than questioning the empirical truth of mythical prohibitions, the present study investigates how symbolic narratives are transformed into ethical principles that guide individual behavior, reinforce collective responsibility, and shape religious consciousness in everyday social life. The analysis further seeks to explain the relationship between ethical meaning, communal belief, and theological interpretation within an indigenous cultural system that has successfully maintained its continuity across generations despite rapid social transformation. This perspective allows mythical discourse to be interpreted as an ethical language through which religious and cultural values are simultaneously negotiated, internalized, and reproduced within community practices. Methodologically, the study employs an ethnographic qualitative approach to capture indigenous interpretations from the perspective of community members themselves, enabling a contextual understanding of ethical intelligence that cannot be adequately explained through purely normative or textual analyses. Ultimately, this research contributes theoretically by proposing ethical intelligence as a conceptual framework for interpreting indigenous myths within religious societies and contributes methodologically by demonstrating the value of ethnographic inquiry in uncovering the ethical structures embedded in local belief systems.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed an empirical qualitative research design using an ethnographic approach to investigate the construct of ethical intelligence embedded in the *pamali* myth within the religiosity of the Kampung Naga indigenous community. Ethnography was selected because the research sought to understand the cultural meanings, belief systems, and ethical practices that are continuously reproduced through the daily lives of community members rather than to measure predetermined variables. The study was conducted in Kampung Naga, Salawu District, Tasikmalaya Regency, West Java, Indonesia, a traditional indigenous settlement recognized for preserving Sundanese customs while maintaining a strong Islamic identity. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on

their cultural knowledge, social roles, and direct involvement in preserving customary traditions. The participants included traditional leaders (*kuncen* and customary elders), religious leaders, senior community members, parents, and several younger residents who actively participate in customary and religious activities. Data were collected through prolonged field observations, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and documentation of customary practices, local narratives, and community regulations related to *pamali*. The integration of these complementary sources enabled the researchers to capture both the explicit expressions and the implicit ethical meanings underlying the community's mythological beliefs.

The primary research instrument was the researchers themselves, supported by interview protocols, observation guidelines, field notes, reflective journals, and documentation records developed according to the objectives of the study. The credibility and trustworthiness of the findings were strengthened through methodological triangulation by comparing evidence obtained from interviews, participant observations, and documentary sources, as well as source triangulation involving participants from different social positions within the community. Member checking was conducted by discussing preliminary interpretations with selected key informants to ensure that the reconstructed meanings accurately represented the participants' perspectives, while peer debriefing among the research team was undertaken to minimize interpretative bias. Data analysis followed an iterative ethnographic procedure consisting of data organization, repeated reading of field materials, open coding, category development, thematic interpretation, and contextual interpretation of the relationship between mythical narratives, ethical values, and religious beliefs. Throughout the analytical process, attention was directed toward identifying how *pamali* functions as a cultural mechanism for constructing ethical intelligence and regulating collective behavior within the indigenous community. Ethical considerations were maintained by obtaining voluntary informed consent from all participants, guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality, respecting customary regulations during fieldwork, and ensuring that all interpretations were presented with sensitivity toward the cultural and religious values of the Kampung Naga community.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms and Expressions of the *Pamali* Myth in Kampung Naga

The ethnographic investigation demonstrates that *pamali* constitutes one of the most fundamental cultural mechanisms through which the Kampung Naga indigenous community regulates everyday behaviour and preserves ancestral values across generations. Field observations and interviews with customary leaders, religious figures, parents, and community members consistently revealed that *pamali* is interpreted as *pantrang* or *cadu*, referring to actions that should be avoided because they are believed to produce undesirable consequences affecting personal well-being, social relationships, environmental balance, or religious life. Although these consequences are commonly articulated through mythical narratives concerning illness, misfortune, supernatural disturbances, or social failure, participants emphasized that the essential purpose of *pamali* lies in cultivating proper conduct rather than promoting irrational fear. Researchers further observed that compliance with *pamali* is rarely enforced through formal sanctions because its authority originates from collective cultural legitimacy and long-standing communal consensus. This finding indicates that mythical discourse continues to function effectively because it has become embedded within everyday social practices and intergenerational learning processes instead of existing merely as inherited folklore. Such characteristics are consistent with anthropological perspectives that interpret myths as cultural instruments through which communities organize moral behaviour and sustain social order over time (Malinowski, 1954).

The empirical findings identified thirty-three *pamali* expressions that continue to be recognized and practiced within Kampung Naga, covering various aspects of domestic life, agriculture, environmental management, social interaction, and religious conduct. Rather than appearing as isolated prohibitions, these expressions collectively form a coherent normative system that guides individuals in determining appropriate behaviour according to particular social and cultural contexts. Interviews revealed that community members generally do not question the literal truth of mythical consequences because they have internalized the ethical intentions conveyed by each prohibition through continuous interaction with parents, customary elders, and other community members. Researchers also found that the word *pamali* itself possesses strong communicative authority, as parents frequently utter only this

single expression without explaining its consequences, yet children immediately understand that the prohibited behaviour should be avoided. This transmission pattern illustrates that indigenous ethical education is constructed through repeated socialization and habitual practice rather than formal instruction or written customary regulations. Similar educational patterns have been identified in Kampung Naga, where indigenous knowledge is continuously reproduced through daily cultural interaction and intergenerational transmission of local values (Gunara et al., 2019).

Table 1. Classification of *Pamali* Expressions in Kampung Naga

Category	Representative <i>Pamali</i>	Dominant Ethical Meaning	Primary Function
Environmental Conservation	Entering sacred forests, catching fish using poison	Environmental responsibility	Ecosystem conservation
Religious Conduct	Facing the Qibla while relieving oneself, activities before Maghrib	Spiritual discipline	Religious observance
Personal Discipline	Sleeping at dusk, waking up late, cutting nails at night	Self-control	Character development
Social Interaction	Sitting on the doorstep, shouting at children, laughing loudly	Respect and courtesy	Social harmony
Agricultural Life	Planting and harvesting outside customary periods	Collective responsibility	Agricultural sustainability

The classification presented in Table 1 demonstrates that the diversity of *pamali* expressions converges into several interconnected ethical domains rather than functioning as fragmented customary prohibitions. Although each expression appears to regulate a specific activity, comparative analysis of the interview data indicates that they consistently promote broader moral principles related to discipline, responsibility, moderation, respect, and environmental stewardship. Participants frequently associated different *pamali* expressions with similar behavioural expectations, suggesting that symbolic diversity serves primarily as an educational strategy for reinforcing ethical values across multiple dimensions of everyday life. This pattern also explains why the same individual may encounter different *pamali* expressions throughout daily activities while simultaneously internalizing a coherent moral orientation. Earlier studies similarly concluded that Kampung Naga's local wisdom represents an integrated cultural system supporting environmental preservation, social cohesion, and sustainable communal life rather than a collection of unrelated customs (Mulyanie et al., 2023; Saladin et al., 2019). The ethnographic evidence therefore confirms that the principal significance of *pamali* lies in its capacity to transform symbolic narratives into practical ethical guidance that remains meaningful within contemporary indigenous society.



Figure 1. Children Playing Traditional Games before Sunset

Source: Personal Documentation, August 5, 2022

The observational evidence presented in Figure 1 illustrates one of the most tangible manifestations of *pamali* in everyday life, particularly the prohibition against children playing at dusk (*ulah ulin sareupna, bisi aya sandekala*). During field observations, children were consistently found engaging in traditional games only until the late afternoon before voluntarily returning home to bathe, prepare for the Maghrib prayer, and attend Qur'anic learning activities. Interviews with parents and customary elders revealed that the mythical reference to *sandekala* is not primarily intended to cultivate fear of supernatural beings but rather to establish temporal discipline, ensure children's safety, and introduce regular religious routines from an early age. Researchers also observed that children complied with this customary restriction naturally, indicating that the ethical message had become internalized through continuous family interaction rather than external coercion or formal sanctions. This finding suggests that mythical language functions as a culturally acceptable pedagogical strategy through which behavioural discipline is developed without direct confrontation between adults and children. Similar educational mechanisms have been identified in Kampung Naga, where indigenous knowledge and religious values are transmitted simultaneously through everyday cultural practices and intergenerational learning processes (Gunara et al., 2019). The observed interaction therefore demonstrates that *pamali* operates not only as an oral tradition but also as an educational instrument that transforms symbolic narratives into habitual ethical behaviour.

A broader interpretation of the ethnographic findings indicates that the persistence of *pamali* cannot be adequately explained through the framework of superstition alone because its practical significance lies in maintaining ethical order within the indigenous community. The thirty-three documented expressions collectively regulate relationships between individuals, society, nature, and religious obligations by translating abstract moral principles into concrete behavioural guidance that is easily understood across generations. The community's continued adherence to these prohibitions demonstrates that the effectiveness of indigenous moral systems depends on their capacity to integrate cultural identity, social responsibility, and everyday practice into a coherent normative framework. Rather than competing with modern education or religious teachings, *pamali* complements both by providing culturally contextualized ethical guidance that remains relevant in contemporary social life. Previous studies have similarly argued that the resilience of Kampung Naga's local wisdom reflects the community's ability to preserve indigenous identity while simultaneously adapting to changing educational, religious, and social environments (Harashani, 2018; Musthofa & Setiajid, 2021). The findings presented in this section therefore establish that the forms and expressions of *pamali* constitute more than an inventory of customary prohibitions, serving instead as the empirical foundation for understanding how ethical intelligence is socially constructed and reproduced within the religiosity of the Kampung Naga indigenous community, which becomes the focus of the following section.

Constructing Ethical Intelligence through the *Pamali* Tradition

The ethnographic findings demonstrate that the *pamali* tradition in Kampung Naga extends beyond its conventional interpretation as a customary prohibition and operates as an indigenous system

for constructing ethical intelligence that shapes the moral orientation of community members throughout their lives. Interviews with customary elders revealed that every *pamali* inherited from the ancestors contains ethical instructions designed to cultivate desirable behaviour, preserve communal harmony, and maintain balanced relationships between humans, nature, and God. Participants consistently explained that obedience to *pamali* is not motivated solely by fear of mythical sanctions but by the awareness that violating ancestral teachings represents a failure to uphold moral responsibility within the community. Field observations further indicated that these ethical messages are continuously reinforced through family interaction, communal ceremonies, agricultural practices, and religious activities, allowing individuals to internalize moral values naturally through repeated participation in everyday life. Rather than relying upon written regulations or formal legal mechanisms, the Kampung Naga community reproduces ethical intelligence through symbolic narratives that gradually become habitual patterns of thought and behaviour. Such findings reinforce the proposition that myths remain socially relevant because they function as dynamic cultural media through which ethical values are continuously interpreted and practiced within specific historical and cultural contexts (Roibin, 2010). The empirical evidence therefore positions *pamali* as an indigenous ethical framework that transforms inherited cultural narratives into practical moral reasoning.

The analytical interpretation of the field data further indicates that ethical intelligence constructed through *pamali* is multidimensional because each prohibition simultaneously addresses personal conduct, interpersonal relationships, environmental responsibility, and religious commitment. Although community members usually encounter *pamali* in the form of simple oral prohibitions, interviews revealed that they gradually understand the broader ethical purposes embedded within these symbolic expressions as they mature and assume greater responsibilities within the community. Researchers observed that identical *pamali* expressions frequently generated multiple ethical consequences, indicating that a single customary prohibition rarely functions within only one moral domain. This multidimensional character distinguishes *pamali* from ordinary social rules because its symbolic language encourages individuals to evaluate the ethical implications of their behaviour from several interconnected perspectives rather than focusing exclusively on immediate personal consequences. The findings therefore suggest that ethical intelligence develops through the integration of complementary moral dimensions instead of through isolated behavioural instructions. Similar studies have emphasized that indigenous knowledge systems preserve their resilience because diverse customary practices collectively reinforce coherent ethical orientations that guide everyday decision-making (Harashani, 2018; Halim et al., 2025). To clarify this multidimensional structure, the principal ethical dimensions identified during the ethnographic analysis are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Dimensions of Ethical Intelligence Constructed through the *Pamali* Tradition

Ethical Dimension	Representative <i>Pamali</i>	Ethical Value	Behavioural Outcome
Individual Ethics	Sleeping at dusk, cutting nails at night	Self-discipline and responsibility	Personal character formation
Social Ethics	Sitting on the doorstep, shouting at children	Respect, empathy, and courtesy	Social harmony
Ecological Ethics	Entering sacred forests, poisoning rivers	Environmental stewardship	Sustainable environmental behaviour
Religious Ethics	Activities before Maghrib, respect for the Qibla	Spiritual obedience	Religious discipline and piety

The first dimension emerging from the ethnographic findings is individual ethical intelligence, which refers to the capacity of community members to regulate personal conduct according to culturally accepted standards of discipline, responsibility, and self-control. Interviews with parents and customary elders revealed that many *pamali* expressions concerning sleeping habits, eating behaviour, personal hygiene, and speech are intentionally introduced during early childhood because these daily routines are considered the foundation of moral character. Participants explained that children are first encouraged to obey *pamali* because of its mythical consequences, yet as they mature, they gradually

understand the ethical reasoning behind each prohibition and continue practicing it voluntarily. Researchers observed that this transition from external obedience to internal moral awareness reflects a process of ethical maturation in which symbolic narratives evolve into personal values guiding everyday behaviour. Such findings indicate that *pamali* does not merely prohibit undesirable actions but facilitates the gradual development of reflective self-discipline capable of directing behaviour without constant external supervision. Similar observations have demonstrated that character formation within indigenous communities is predominantly achieved through continuous habituation and intergenerational transmission of local wisdom rather than through formal ethical instruction (Hamdani & Kumalasari, 2025). The empirical evidence therefore suggests that individual ethical intelligence represents the initial stage in the broader construction of indigenous moral consciousness.

The second and third dimensions comprise social ethical intelligence and ecological ethical intelligence, both of which were consistently identified throughout participant observations and interview narratives. Social ethical intelligence is reflected in *pamali* expressions regulating interpersonal behaviour, including prohibitions against sitting on the doorstep, speaking disrespectfully, shouting at children, or disturbing communal harmony, all of which encourage mutual respect, empathy, and social responsibility within the village. Community members emphasized that maintaining harmonious relationships is regarded as an ethical obligation because individual behaviour is believed to influence collective well-being and social cohesion. Ecological ethical intelligence is equally evident in customary prohibitions governing sacred forests, water sources, agricultural practices, and the utilization of natural resources, where mythical narratives function as effective cultural instruments for promoting environmental responsibility without relying upon formal conservation policies. Field observations confirmed that these customary restrictions continue to shape community interactions with the surrounding landscape, contributing to the preservation of forests, rivers, and agricultural ecosystems that have supported Kampung Naga for generations. Previous studies likewise conclude that the environmental resilience of Kampung Naga is inseparable from indigenous cultural values that integrate ecological conservation into everyday social practices and local wisdom (Mulyanie et al., 2023; Firnadi, 2025). The findings therefore demonstrate that ethical intelligence extends beyond personal morality by simultaneously governing relationships among individuals, society, and the natural environment.

The final dimension identified in this study is religious ethical intelligence, which represents the integration of indigenous ethical values with Islamic religiosity in the everyday lives of the Kampung Naga community. Participants consistently stated that obedience to *pamali* is inseparable from their understanding of religious devotion because respecting ancestral teachings is perceived as part of preserving the moral order established by previous generations without contradicting Islamic principles. Researchers observed that several *pamali* expressions explicitly encourage behaviours associated with worship, respect for sacred directions, preparation for prayer, and disciplined participation in religious activities, illustrating that customary traditions and religious obligations reinforce one another in daily practice. Rather than functioning as competing systems of belief, indigenous customs and Islamic teachings are interpreted as complementary ethical frameworks that collectively cultivate virtuous conduct and communal responsibility. This interpretation corresponds with previous studies demonstrating that the traditions of Kampung Naga represent an accommodation between Islamic values and local wisdom, where customary practices continue to express religious meaning without necessarily creating theological conflict (Darmalaksana et al., 2022; Muslim, 2020). The findings also support broader discussions concerning the dialectical relationship between Sundanese cultural traditions and Islamic ethical values, in which mythical narratives become meaningful vehicles for communicating religious morality (Qusyaeri & Azhari, 2019). Consequently, religious ethical intelligence constitutes the highest level of ethical integration because it connects personal virtue, social responsibility, and ecological stewardship within a unified spiritual worldview.

Taken together, the ethnographic findings demonstrate that ethical intelligence in Kampung Naga is constructed through the dynamic interaction of four mutually reinforcing dimensions comprising individual, social, ecological, and religious ethics rather than through isolated moral instructions. Each *pamali* expression contributes simultaneously to multiple dimensions of ethical development, allowing symbolic narratives to function as comprehensive mechanisms for cultivating responsible behaviour across different spheres of community life. The integration of these dimensions explains why *pamali* continues to remain socially relevant despite increasing exposure to

modernization, scientific knowledge, and formal education, as its primary strength lies in translating abstract ethical principles into practical habits that are easily understood and collectively practiced. The present study therefore extends previous scholarship by proposing that *pamali* should be interpreted as a construct of ethical intelligence instead of being viewed exclusively as folklore, superstition, or local wisdom. This conceptualization offers a broader analytical perspective for understanding how indigenous societies transform symbolic cultural narratives into sustainable moral systems that regulate behaviour while simultaneously strengthening religious identity and collective resilience. The multidimensional framework developed in this study provides the conceptual foundation for the following discussion, which examines how ethical intelligence embodied in *pamali* contributes to the construction of religiosity and indigenous moral order within the Kampung Naga community.

Pamali, Religiosity, and Indigenous Moral Order

The ethnographic findings demonstrate that *pamali* occupies a central position in constructing the religious morality and indigenous moral order of the Kampung Naga community. The collected data from interviews, observations, and customary documentation indicate that *pamali* is not understood merely as a collection of prohibitions inherited from ancestors, but as a moral reference system that regulates the relationship between human beings, God, society, and nature. Community members consistently explained that obedience toward *pamali* represents an expression of respect for ancestral teachings and religious responsibility because ethical conduct is perceived as inseparable from spiritual commitment. The researchers found that the authority of *pamali* emerges from collective acceptance, where individuals comply with customary values because these values have become integrated into their personal consciousness and communal identity. This condition demonstrates that indigenous morality is maintained through internalized cultural meanings rather than through formal institutional control or written regulations. Such a pattern corresponds with the anthropological understanding that myths and traditions function as social mechanisms that organize human behaviour by providing symbolic explanations for moral obligations within a particular cultural context (Dhavamony, 1995; Roibin, 2010).

The relationship between *pamali* and religiosity in Kampung Naga is reflected in the way customary practices are interpreted through Islamic ethical principles. The findings reveal that several *pamali* expressions contain religious meanings related to maintaining purity, respecting sacred symbols, controlling behaviour, and preparing oneself for religious activities. For example, the prohibition against facing the Qibla when disposing of impurities represents not only a customary restriction but also a cultural interpretation of Islamic teachings concerning respect toward sacred directions. Similarly, the prohibition against playing during *sareupna* (the transition period before sunset) functions as a reminder for children to prepare for Maghrib prayer and Qur'anic learning activities. Interviews with religious figures indicated that the community does not perceive these practices as contradictory between tradition and religion, but rather as interconnected moral guidance that strengthens religious awareness. Previous research confirms that the traditions of Kampung Naga represent a process of interaction between Islamic teachings and local wisdom, in which customary practices become expressions of lived religious values within indigenous society (Darmalaksana et al., 2022; Muslim, 2020).

The integration between *pamali* and religiosity can be identified through several ethical functions that shape the moral behaviour of community members. Table 3 presents the relationship between representative *pamali* expressions, religious meanings, and the ethical behaviours constructed through customary practices.

Table 3. Relationship between Pamali Expressions, Religious Values, and Indigenous Moral Order

Pamali Expression	Religious and Cultural Meaning	Ethical Value Constructed	Moral Function
<i>Ulah kahampangan mayun kibrat</i> (prohibition against facing Qibla when relieving oneself)	Respect toward Islamic sacred orientation	Spiritual awareness and respect	Maintaining religious discipline

<i>Ulah ulin sareupna, bisi aya sandekala</i> (prohibition against playing before sunset)	Reminder of Maghrib prayer preparation and child supervision	Discipline and responsibility	Strengthening religious routines
<i>Ulah seuri nyakakak, bisi hideung ati</i> (prohibition against excessive laughter)	Controlling expression and maintaining manners	Humility and self-control	Preserving social ethics
<i>Ulah ngala lauk ku portas</i> (prohibition against poisoning fish)	Respect toward creation and environmental balance	Ecological responsibility	Protecting natural harmony
<i>Ulah tandur lain dina poena</i> (prohibition against planting outside customary periods)	Respect toward ancestral agricultural knowledge	Collective responsibility	Maintaining communal sustainability

The classification presented in Table 3 illustrates that *pamali* expressions operate through a symbolic relationship between religious consciousness and moral practice. Each prohibition contains a visible behavioural restriction and an implicit ethical orientation that directs individuals toward responsible action. The findings indicate that the religious significance of *pamali* does not emerge solely from explicit theological references but also from the ethical consequences produced through daily practices. The community's interpretation of these traditions demonstrates that religiosity is experienced through behavioural discipline, social responsibility, and environmental awareness rather than limited to ritual activities. This perspective supports the argument that indigenous religious life often develops through the interaction between formal religious teachings and culturally embedded practices that provide practical moral guidance (Qusyaeri & Azhari, 2019). Therefore, *pamali* represents a cultural medium through which Islamic ethics are localized, experienced, and reproduced within the social structure of Kampung Naga.

The persistence of *pamali* as an ethical norm is also related to its capacity to maintain indigenous moral order within changing social conditions. The ethnographic data show that community members continue to refer to *pamali* when making decisions regarding personal behaviour, family education, environmental management, and social interaction. Traditional leaders explained that although younger generations have greater access to modern education and technology, *pamali* remains relevant because it provides moral direction that cannot be replaced by external knowledge systems. Researchers observed that the transmission of *pamali* occurs through informal education, particularly through parental guidance, community interaction, and participation in customary activities. This process demonstrates that moral order in Kampung Naga is reproduced through cultural learning mechanisms that combine experience, memory, and collective interpretation. Studies on indigenous education in Kampung Naga similarly emphasize that local knowledge functions as an important medium for transmitting cultural and religious values across generations (Gunara et al., 2019; Ningrum, 2016).

The role of *pamali* in sustaining moral order is further strengthened by its ability to regulate relationships between individuals and their surrounding environment. The community's ecological practices, including the protection of sacred forests, responsible agricultural activities, and restrictions on harmful resource exploitation, demonstrate that environmental ethics are incorporated into the same moral framework as social and religious obligations. Participants viewed nature not merely as a resource for human consumption but as part of a balanced relationship that requires respect and responsibility. The prohibition system therefore creates an ethical awareness that connects human welfare with environmental preservation. Previous studies have identified that Kampung Naga's sustainability is strongly influenced by local knowledge systems that limit excessive exploitation and maintain ecological equilibrium (Anwar et al., 2018; Gustiana & Supriatna, 2021). These findings indicate that *pamali* contributes to an indigenous moral order in which religious devotion, social harmony, and ecological responsibility are mutually reinforcing dimensions.

The overall interpretation of the findings demonstrates that *pamali* functions as a cultural and religious foundation for constructing moral order within the Kampung Naga indigenous community. The tradition operates through a process of ethical internalization in which mythical narratives gradually

become personal commitments and collective responsibilities. Rather than functioning as rigid restrictions, *pamali* provides a symbolic language through which community members understand appropriate behaviour, maintain social relationships, and preserve spiritual values. The integration between customary knowledge and Islamic religiosity illustrates that indigenous moral systems can develop sophisticated ethical frameworks that remain meaningful within contemporary contexts. This finding expands previous discussions of local wisdom by positioning *pamali* not only as cultural heritage but also as an active mechanism of ethical intelligence formation. Through its continuous reproduction in everyday life, *pamali* demonstrates how indigenous communities construct moral consciousness by connecting ancestral knowledge, religious values, and social responsibility into a unified ethical order.

Theoretical Implications of Ethical Intelligence in Indigenous Communities

The ethnographic findings provide significant theoretical implications for understanding ethical intelligence as a culturally constructed phenomenon rather than merely an individual cognitive capacity associated with rational decision-making. The evidence from Kampung Naga demonstrates that ethical intelligence emerges through continuous interaction between inherited knowledge, social practices, religious interpretation, and environmental awareness. Interviews with customary leaders and community members indicate that individuals develop ethical understanding through participation in cultural activities, observation of social behaviour, and internalization of ancestral teachings transmitted through *pamali*. This process suggests that ethical intelligence within indigenous communities is relational and collective because moral awareness is formed through connections between individuals and their cultural environment. Unlike approaches that conceptualize ethics primarily as personal reasoning or individual competence, the Kampung Naga case reveals that ethical intelligence can also emerge from communal narratives that provide shared frameworks for evaluating appropriate actions. This interpretation contributes to broader theoretical discussions regarding indigenous knowledge systems, where morality is constructed through lived experiences, symbolic meanings, and collective memory (Harashani, 2018; Halim et al., 2025).

The analysis of *pamali* indicates that ethical intelligence in indigenous communities consists of interconnected dimensions involving self-regulation, social responsibility, ecological consciousness, and spiritual awareness. The findings demonstrate that each *pamali* expression functions as a moral symbol that encourages individuals to evaluate their actions based on broader consequences rather than immediate personal interests. For instance, prohibitions related to personal discipline cultivate self-control, while restrictions concerning social interaction promote empathy and respect toward others. Similarly, environmental-related *pamali* develops awareness that human existence is dependent upon maintaining harmonious relationships with nature, while religious-related *pamali* strengthens the connection between ethical behaviour and spiritual responsibility. The multidimensional structure identified from the ethnographic data indicates that ethical intelligence should be understood as an integrated capacity involving cognitive understanding, emotional awareness, moral commitment, and practical behaviour. The theoretical model derived from the findings is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Theoretical Construction of Ethical Intelligence through the Pamali Tradition

Dimension of Ethical Intelligence		Empirical Basis from Pamali Tradition	Core Ethical Principle	Manifestation in Community Life
Individual Intelligence	Ethical	Prohibitions related to eating, sleeping, hygiene, and personal behaviour	Self-control and responsibility	Formation of disciplined individuals
Social Intelligence	Ethical	Prohibitions related to speech, manners, and interaction with others	Respect and empathy	Maintenance of social harmony
Ecological Intelligence	Ethical	Protection of sacred forests, water resources, and agricultural systems	Environmental stewardship	Sustainable relationship with nature

Religious Intelligence	Ethical	Respect toward Qibla, prayer time, and sacred practices	Spiritual responsibility	Integration of faith and ethical action
------------------------	---------	---	--------------------------	---

The framework presented in Table 4 demonstrates that ethical intelligence within Kampung Naga is constructed through a holistic relationship between individual morality, social engagement, ecological awareness, and religious commitment. The findings challenge the assumption that ethical intelligence is primarily developed through formal education or abstract moral reasoning because the Kampung Naga experience reveals that ethical competence can emerge from cultural participation and symbolic learning processes. The community's ability to transform mythical narratives into practical ethical behaviour indicates that indigenous traditions possess sophisticated mechanisms for moral education. This theoretical perspective aligns with studies emphasizing that local wisdom contains educational values capable of shaping character formation, social responsibility, and environmental awareness (Gustiana & Supriatna, 2021; Hamdani & Kumalasari, 2025). Therefore, the concept of ethical intelligence derived from *pamali* expands conventional understandings of morality by incorporating cultural and communal dimensions.

The first theoretical implication concerns the relationship between myth and ethical rationality. The findings reveal that mythical narratives within Kampung Naga should not be interpreted as irrational beliefs that oppose logical thinking, because their deeper function lies in communicating ethical principles through culturally meaningful symbols. Although some *pamali* expressions contain supernatural consequences, community members understand these narratives as moral reminders that encourage responsible behaviour. This indicates that myth operates as a symbolic language through which abstract ethical concepts become accessible within everyday life. Such interpretation corresponds with anthropological perspectives that recognize myths as systems of meaning capable of organizing social values and explaining relationships between humans, society, and the surrounding world (Malinowski, 1954; Roibin, 2010). The theoretical contribution of this finding lies in repositioning indigenous myths as active ethical frameworks rather than passive cultural remnants.

The second theoretical implication relates to the role of indigenous knowledge in developing sustainable moral systems. The findings demonstrate that ethical intelligence in Kampung Naga is inseparable from ecological consciousness because environmental responsibility is embedded within cultural and spiritual obligations. The prohibition against entering sacred forests, damaging natural resources, or using destructive fishing methods illustrates that conservation practices are maintained through moral commitment rather than external regulation. This finding contributes to sustainability discourse by showing that indigenous communities may possess internal ethical mechanisms that support environmental protection through cultural values. Previous research has demonstrated that Kampung Naga's ecological practices reflect a deep connection between local wisdom, environmental preservation, and community resilience (Mulyanie et al., 2023; Firnadi, 2025). The theoretical implication is that ethical intelligence should include ecological dimensions because responsible human behaviour cannot be separated from relationships with the natural environment.

The third theoretical implication concerns the intersection between indigenous morality and religious identity. The findings show that *pamali* creates a bridge between Sundanese cultural traditions and Islamic ethical teachings, producing a form of religiosity that is simultaneously local and universal. The community's adherence to *pamali* demonstrates that religious values are not only expressed through formal rituals but also through culturally embedded ethical practices that regulate daily life. This finding supports the argument that indigenous religious experiences are shaped through continuous negotiation between inherited traditions and religious interpretations. Studies on Kampung Naga have similarly highlighted that local wisdom and Islamic values interact dynamically, allowing customary practices to function as expressions of religious commitment (Darmalaksana et al., 2022; Muslim, 2020). The theoretical significance of this relationship is that ethical intelligence should be viewed as culturally situated, where moral understanding develops through specific historical, social, and spiritual contexts.

The final implication of this study is the proposition that ethical intelligence represents a collective cultural achievement rather than an exclusively individual attribute. The Kampung Naga case demonstrates that ethical awareness is produced through social relationships, community memory, and shared participation in customary practices. Individuals become ethically intelligent because they are

embedded within a cultural environment that continuously provides moral references, symbolic meanings, and behavioural expectations. This finding extends contemporary perspectives on ethics by emphasizing that moral competence is shaped through interaction between personal reflection and collective experience. The *pamali* tradition illustrates that indigenous communities maintain ethical systems capable of guiding human behaviour across personal, social, ecological, and spiritual domains. Consequently, the construct of ethical intelligence developed from Kampung Naga contributes a culturally grounded theoretical perspective that recognizes indigenous traditions as important sources for understanding how humans develop moral consciousness and sustain ethical communities.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the *pamali* tradition in the Kampung Naga indigenous community represents an ethical knowledge system that continues to regulate individual and collective behaviour through unwritten cultural norms. The ethnographic findings reveal that the existing *pamali* expressions are not merely prohibitions based on mythical consequences, but symbolic narratives containing ethical messages that guide community members in maintaining appropriate relationships with themselves, other people, nature, and God. The analysis demonstrates that *pamali* constructs ethical intelligence through four interconnected dimensions, namely individual ethics, social ethics, ecological ethics, and religious ethics. These dimensions do not operate separately because each ethical principle reinforces the others in forming a comprehensive moral framework that shapes everyday practices. The persistence of *pamali* within Kampung Naga illustrates that indigenous communities possess sophisticated mechanisms for transmitting ethical values through oral traditions, habituation, and intergenerational learning. Through this process, mythical narratives are transformed into practical moral guidance that supports social harmony, environmental sustainability, and spiritual awareness.

The findings further indicate that the ethical meanings embedded within *pamali* are compatible with the Islamic religiosity practiced by the Kampung Naga community. Rather than contradicting religious teachings, *pamali* functions as a cultural medium through which religious values are interpreted and implemented within everyday life. The mythical messages contained in *pamali* demonstrate how ancestral traditions and religious principles interact in producing a contextual form of ethical practice that influences personal behaviour, social relationships, and ecological responsibility. This study therefore positions *pamali* not merely as folklore or inherited belief, but as a form of indigenous wisdom that contributes to the construction of moral consciousness within the community. Nevertheless, further studies are required to examine more deeply the relationship between myth and religion in Kampung Naga, particularly regarding whether religion functions as a foundation for mythical interpretation, whether myths are adapted to support religious interests, or whether both systems develop through a process of cultural integration. Despite these possibilities, the central meaning shared by both myth and religion remains the same, namely the cultivation of ethical principles that encourage humans to live responsibly, harmoniously, and meaningfully within their social and spiritual environment.

REFERENCES

- Al Baqi, MFA (1945). *Al Mu'jam al Mufahras Lialfadi al-Quran al-Karim* . Dahlan's Honor.
- Ayyub, H. (1994). *Islamic Ethics Towards True Life* . Trigenda Karya.
- Darmalaksana, W., Ratnasih, T., & Nur, S. (2022). The Relationship Between Islam and Local Wisdom in the Kampung Naga Tradition: Living Sunnah Research. *Living Sunnah Research. Diroyah: Journal of Hadith Science Studies* , 6 (2), 115–127. <https://doi.org/10.15575/diroyah.v6i2.15316>
- Darmawan, W., Mulyana, A., & Kurniawati, Y. (2022). Study of local wisdom based on disaster mitigation in the community of traditional villages in West Java as materials in history learning. *Historia: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Peneliti Sejarah*, 5(1), 21-26. <https://doi.org/10.17509/historia.v5i1.40123>
- Dhavamony, M. (1995). *Phenomenology of Religion* . IKAPI.
- Firnadi, A. A. (2025). Integrating Local Wisdom into Climate Literacy: Cultural Practices and Climate Resilience in Indonesia. *Journal of Geographical Sciences and Education*, 3(2), 141–154. <https://doi.org/10.69606/geography.v3i2.225>
- Gunara, S., Sutanto, TS, & Cipta, F. (2019). Local Knowledge System if Kampung Naga: A Study to Investigate the Educational Values of Indigenous People in Transmitting Religious and Cultural

- Values. *International Journal of Instruction*, 12(3), 219–236. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2019.12314a>
- Gustiana, AD, & Supriatna, M. (2021). Ecological Value of Pamali Soy Sauce in the Community of Kampung Naga, Tasikmalaya Regency. *Ta Dib: Journal of Islamic Education*, 10(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.29313/tjpi.v10i1.6999>
- Halim, I. A., Hambali, R. Y. A., Marjani, G. I., & Sidik, M. D. H. (2025). Wisdom Toward Nature: A Perennial Approach to the Cultural Perspective of Indigenous People in Indonesia. *Religió Jurnal Studi Agama-Agama*, 15(1), 64–83. <https://doi.org/10.15642/religio.v15i1.3107>
- Hamdani, R. R., & Kumalasari, D. (2025). Menyelusuri Kearifan Lokal: Analisis Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Karakter dalam Tradisi Pantangan di Kampung Naga. *Jazirah: Jurnal Peradaban Dan Kebudayaan*, 6(1), 100–113. <https://doi.org/10.51190/jazirah.v6i01.232>
- Harashani, H. (2018). Local Wisdom of Kampung Naga in the Era of Globalization. *Jhss (Journal of Humanities and Social Studies)*, 2(1), 51–54. <https://doi.org/10.33751/jhss.v2i1.823>
- Malinowski, B. (1954). *Magic, Science, and Religion*. Daubleday Anchor Book.
- Mulyanie, E., Hilman Hakim, E., Indrianeu, T., Al Husaini, H., & Rismawati, R. (2023). Analysis of the Value of Local Wisdom of Kampung Naga Based on Environmental Preservation As A Community's Efforts in Managing the Environment. *JURNAL GEOGRAFI Geografi Dan Pengajarannya*, 21(2), 119–128. <https://doi.org/10.26740/jggp.v21n2.p119-128>
- Muslim, A. (2020). Islam Nusantara: A Study on the Effect of Local Wisdom Value on Customary Community's Piety in Kampung Naga. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Literature & Muslim Society*, 5(2), 159. <https://doi.org/10.22515/islimus.v5i2.2348>
- Musthofa, W., & Setiajid, S. (2021). The Role of the Leadership of the Naga Village Traditional Institution in Maintaining the Local Wisdom of Naga Village. *Unnes Political Science Journal*, 5(1), 21–25. <https://doi.org/10.15294/upsj.v5i1.44028>
- Nasir, Badrudin, Pujiyati, W., & Safitri, A. (2020). Social Development: Education Services for the Indigenous Community in Kampung Naga. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 12 (10), 209–225. https://www.ijicc.net/images/vol12/iss10/121028_Nasir_2020_E_R.pdf
- Ningrum, E. (2016). The Uniqueness of Local Wisdom Education in the Kampung Naga Community of Tasikmalaya in Indonesia. *Man in India*, 96 (8), 2503–2512. https://serialsjournals.com/abstract/16769_10.pdf
- Qusyaeri, N., & Azhari, F. (2019). Dialectics of Sundanese Culture and Islamic Values (A Study of Da'wah Values in Pamali Culture in Tatar Sunda). *Syntax Idea*, 1(4). <https://doi.org/10.46799/syntax-idea.v1i4.35>
- Rachmawati, Y. (2017). *Parenting Tradition in Sundanese Culture in West Java-Indonesia* (1st ed.). Pustaka Matahari.
- Roibin, R. (2010). Religion and Myth: From Creative Imagination to Dynamic Reality. *El-HARAKAH (ACCREDITED)*, 12(2), 85–97. <https://doi.org/10.18860/el.v0i0.445>
- Saladin, A., Purnomo, AB, & Tundono, S. (2019). Views on the Manifestation of Local Wisdom (Case: Kampung Naga, West Java). *International Journal on Livable Space*, 3(1), 13–22. <https://doi.org/10.25105/livas.v3i1.3868>