



Self-regulation through Pasang ri Kajang: indigenous psychology among the Ammatoa Kajang community

Nabila Salsabina*, Meldayani Tendean, Pelangi Kasih

Universitas Bosowa, Makassar, Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia

*Correspondence author: nabilasalsabinaakbar13@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: to explore self-regulation among the Ammatoa Kajang Indigenous community through the internalization of Pasang ri Kajang values.

Method: this study employed a qualitative intrinsic case study design involving six members of the Ammatoa Kajang Indigenous community in Bulukumba, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, and analyzed using thematic analysis. Data credibility was strengthened through source triangulation, member checking, and an audit trail.

Findings: self-regulation among the Ammatoa Kajang community was deeply shaped by the internalization of Pasang ri Kajang. Four main themes emerged: adherence to custom, cultural identity, simplicity of life (kamase-masea), and the impact of modernization. Self-regulation operated through self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction, enabling individuals to monitor, evaluate, and adjust their behavior in accordance with customary values while selectively adapting to social change.

Implications: contributes to indigenous psychology by demonstrating that self-regulation is culturally embedded and can be shaped by indigenous value systems.

Originality: lies in linking Bandura's self-regulation framework with Pasang ri Kajang as an indigenous value system, highlighting how customary values are internalized and transformed into culturally grounded mechanisms of self-regulation.



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Introduction

Indonesia is characterized by extensive cultural diversity, including numerous indigenous communities that continue to preserve ancestral knowledge, customary institutions, and value systems as integral parts of everyday life (Anggraeni et al., 2024).

Among these communities, the Ammatoa Kajang community in Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi, represents an indigenous society that has consistently maintained a distinctive cultural system despite ongoing social change and modernization (Sampean & Sjaf, 2021; Tahir et al., 2025). The community, particularly those living within the customary area of Tana Toa, is known for its commitment to ancestral teachings, simplicity of life, environmental harmony, and adherence to customary norms (Umar et al., 2024). These characteristics are reflected in various aspects of everyday life, including patterns of social interaction, forms of dress, relationships with nature, and restrictions on behaviors considered inconsistent with customary principles (Latief & Syam, 2022; Nongko et al., 2026; Ridhoh & Alfian, 2025). Thus, the cultural system of the Ammatoa Kajang community is not merely a collection of traditions but constitutes an integrated framework that provides direction for how individuals understand themselves, relate to others, and respond to their surrounding environment.

At the center of this cultural system is Pasang ri Kajang, a body of ancestral teachings transmitted across generations and functioning as a moral, social, and spiritual guide for the community. Pasang ri Kajang contains principles concerning appropriate ways of living, interpersonal relationships, environmental responsibility, and relationships with God. It also emphasizes values such as *kamase-masea* (simplicity), honesty, prudence, responsibility, restraint, and obedience to customary rules (Haq et al., 2024; Latief & Syam, 2022; Yusdar et al., 2026). These principles are not limited to abstract cultural beliefs but are continuously practiced and reinforced through everyday social interactions. The role of Ammatoa as the customary leader is also important in maintaining the continuity and consistency of these values through moral authority and customary guidance (Zainuddin et al., 2023). Consequently, Pasang ri Kajang can be understood as a culturally embedded system of behavioral regulation that provides individuals with standards for evaluating actions, controlling desires, and determining appropriate responses to social and environmental situations (Najamuddin et al., 2026; Najjah et al., 2025).

From a psychological perspective, this cultural system raises an important question concerning how individuals regulate themselves within an indigenous cultural context. Self-regulation refers to an individual's capacity to regulate thoughts, emotions, motivation, and behavior in accordance with personal or socially established goals and standards (Bandura, 1991; Zimmerman, 2000). Within social cognitive theory, self-regulation involves processes through which individuals observe and evaluate their own behavior and regulate subsequent actions according to internalized standards (Bandura, 1986, 1991). Self-regulation is therefore not an exclusively individual psychological process; it is also shaped by the social environment, cultural expectations, and value systems that individuals internalize throughout their development (Trommsdorff, 2009). Similarly, emotion regulation involves the processes through which individuals influence the occurrence, intensity, duration, and expression of their emotional responses (Gross, 2014). In this regard, culturally transmitted values may provide standards that guide individuals in managing impulses, emotions, decisions, and behaviors in everyday situations (Leersnyder et al., 2013).

The relevance of this perspective becomes increasingly evident in the context of social change experienced by the Ammatoa Kajang community. Modernization, formal education, communication technologies, and increasing interaction with people outside the customary community have introduced new patterns of information, values, lifestyles, and behavioral expectations (Nain et al., 2025). These changes do not necessarily mean that indigenous values disappear; rather, they may create situations in

which individuals need to negotiate between customary expectations and new social realities (Kariveliparambil et al., 2026). Previous research has documented the persistence of customary values in the Ammatoa Kajang community while also highlighting the challenges posed by modernity and changing social conditions (Kolopaking et al., 2025; Nongko et al., 2026; Ridhoh & Alfian, 2025). The ability of individuals to maintain culturally appropriate behavior while responding to changing circumstances therefore represents an important psychological phenomenon. In such situations, self-regulation may function as a mechanism through which individuals filter external influences, manage impulses, evaluate possible consequences, and select behaviors that remain consistent with their cultural identity.

This phenomenon is particularly important because the regulation of behavior within the Ammatoa Kajang community appears to be closely connected to everyday cultural practices. Individuals are expected to speak appropriately, respect elders, behave cautiously, maintain social harmony, and avoid actions that contradict customary principles. Such behavioral expectations may become internalized through socialization, observation of role models, customary instruction, and repeated participation in community life. The internalization of local wisdom has also been identified as an important mechanism through which cultural values contribute to character formation and behavioral orientation (Satino et al., 2024; Zahrawati et al., 2022). In the Ammatoa Kajang context, the process may involve not only compliance with external rules but also the development of internal standards that influence how individuals think, feel, and act (Nongko et al., 2026). Accordingly, examining self-regulation through *Pasang ri Kajang* provides an opportunity to understand how culturally specific values become psychological resources for managing everyday behavior (Ichwan et al., 2021).

Existing literature has provided substantial knowledge about the cultural and social dimensions of the Ammatoa Kajang community. Latief & Syam (2022) described local wisdom among the Ammatoa Kajang as a fundamental value system that guides individual and collective behavior and contributes to social order. Haq et al. (2024) emphasized *Pasang ri Kajang* as local wisdom that integrates ethical, spiritual, social, and environmental dimensions. Research on environmental conservation has similarly demonstrated that customary values regulate community relationships with the forest and natural resources (Asteria et al., 2024; Najib et al., 2024). The principle of *kamase-masea* has also been discussed as a central value underlying the community's simple way of life (Anugrah & Zaenal, 2026). Meanwhile, Craig & Douglas (2006) examined cultural identity and showed that distinctive practices, including the use of black clothing and restrictions concerning certain technologies, represent important expressions of cultural identity and adherence to customary values. Zainuddin et al. (2023) further highlighted the role of Ammatoa's customary leadership in sustaining the consistency of community behavior. These studies demonstrate that *Pasang ri Kajang* has a significant role in organizing social life, cultural identity, environmental relationships, and collective behavior.

However, the existing literature has predominantly examined *Pasang ri Kajang* from anthropological, sociological, cultural, environmental, and customary leadership perspectives. Although these studies provide an important foundation for understanding the cultural system of the Ammatoa Kajang community, relatively limited attention has been given to the psychological processes occurring at the individual level. In particular, there remains insufficient understanding of how members of the community subjectively interpret customary teachings, internalize them as personal standards, and

use them to regulate emotions, impulses, decisions, and behavior in everyday life. The relationship between Pasang ri Kajang and self-regulation therefore remains an underexplored area. This gap is important because understanding cultural practices solely as collective norms may overlook the psychological processes through which those norms become meaningful and operative within individuals.

The present study addresses this gap by positioning the individual as the primary unit of psychological inquiry while maintaining the cultural context in which the individual develops. Rather than treating Pasang ri Kajang merely as a customary rule system, this study examines how its values are interpreted and transformed into internal guides for self-regulation. The study specifically considers how individuals manage emotions, control impulses, evaluate actions, make decisions, and respond to social situations while remaining guided by culturally internalized principles. This perspective is consistent with social cognitive theory, which views human behavior as the result of reciprocal interactions among personal factors, behavior, and the environment (Bandura, 1986, 1989, 1991). Within this framework, culturally derived standards may influence self-observation, self-evaluation, and self-reaction, thereby shaping regulatory behavior. The concept of self-regulation proposed by Zimmerman (2000) further emphasizes the active role of individuals in monitoring and directing their thoughts, motivation, and behavior toward desired outcomes.

The study also draws on the perspective of emotion regulation proposed by Gross (2014), particularly in understanding how individuals manage emotional responses in situations that may involve conflicting demands or social pressures. From this perspective, self-regulation is not limited to behavioral restraint but also involves how individuals interpret situations, manage emotional experiences, and select appropriate responses. In the Ammatoa Kajang context, these psychological processes may be inseparable from cultural standards derived from Pasang ri Kajang. The values of simplicity, prudence, honesty, responsibility, and adherence to customary norms may provide culturally specific criteria against which individuals evaluate their thoughts, emotions, and actions. Therefore, examining self-regulation within this context may reveal forms of psychological regulation that cannot be fully understood through universal or culturally decontextualized psychological concepts alone.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to develop a more culturally sensitive understanding of psychological processes in indigenous communities. Much of mainstream psychological theory has historically been developed and tested within Western cultural settings, where assumptions concerning autonomy, individual goals, and personal agency may differ from those found in collectivistic and indigenous societies. Bandura's social cognitive perspective recognizes that human agency is exercised within social and environmental contexts (Bandura, 1989, 1991, 2005, 2006), providing a theoretical basis for examining how agency and self-regulation may operate through culturally specific standards. Studying the Ammatoa Kajang community can therefore contribute to a broader understanding of how self-regulation is constructed when individual behavior is deeply embedded in collective values, customary obligations, and ancestral teachings. Such an approach is also consistent with the broader development of indigenous and culturally grounded psychology in Indonesia, which seeks to understand psychological phenomena within the cultural realities of the communities in which they occur.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of the psychological concept of self-regulation with Pasang ri Kajang as an indigenous value system. Previous studies have established the importance of Pasang ri Kajang for social order, environmental

conservation, cultural identity, and customary life (Hafid et al., 2023; Haq et al., 2024; Latief & Syam, 2022; Nongko et al., 2026), but have not sufficiently explored how these cultural principles operate as psychological resources in individuals' everyday self-regulation. This study therefore moves beyond describing what customary values are and examines how those values are subjectively experienced and psychologically enacted. The use of a qualitative approach is particularly appropriate because it enables the researchers to explore participants' meanings, experiences, interpretations, and strategies in depth rather than reducing culturally embedded psychological processes to predetermined variables (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2014). Through this approach, the study seeks to identify culturally meaningful forms of self-regulation that emerge from the lived experience of the Ammatoa Kajang community.

Based on this background, the primary objective of this study is to understand how members of the Ammatoa Kajang community interpret and experience self-regulation through the values of Pasang ri Kajang. More specifically, the study aims to explore how culturally internalized teachings influence individuals' management of emotions, control of impulses, evaluation of actions, decision-making, behavioral adjustment, and responses to social change. The study also seeks to understand how customary norms, prohibitions, social roles, customary leadership, and behavioral exemplars contribute to the development and maintenance of self-regulatory processes in everyday life. This research is important both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it is expected to enrich the study of self-regulation by demonstrating how indigenous value systems and collective cultural standards may shape psychological regulation. It may also contribute to the development of culturally grounded psychological knowledge by showing that self-regulation cannot always be separated from the cultural meanings, social expectations, and moral frameworks in which individuals live. Practically, the findings may provide useful insights for psychologists, educators, researchers, policymakers, and other stakeholders who work with indigenous communities. A culturally informed understanding of self-regulation may support the development of educational, psychological, and community-based approaches that respect local values rather than imposing externally derived frameworks. This is particularly relevant amid modernization, where indigenous communities need to negotiate social change while maintaining cultural continuity.

Ultimately, this study is expected to contribute to the development of indigenous psychology in Indonesia by illustrating the ways in which local cultural knowledge can provide a meaningful foundation for understanding psychological processes. By examining Pasang ri Kajang not only as an ancestral tradition but also as a culturally embedded mechanism of self-regulation, the study seeks to bridge cultural and psychological perspectives. The findings are expected to demonstrate how individuals can exercise self-control, manage emotions and impulses, and adapt to changing social circumstances while remaining connected to their cultural identity and customary values. In doing so, this research may provide a more contextualized understanding of self-regulation and demonstrate the importance of incorporating indigenous knowledge into the development of psychological theory and practice in Indonesia.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using an intrinsic case study design. The design was selected because the study sought to develop an in-depth understanding of participants' subjective experiences of self-regulation within the cultural context of the Ammatoa Kajang Indigenous community. An intrinsic case study is appropriate

when a particular case is considered distinctive and is examined primarily to understand the case itself within its natural and contextual setting (White & Cooper, 2022). In this study, the case was the lived experience of self-regulation among members of the Ammatoa Kajang community as shaped by the customary values of Pasang ri Kajang. Self-regulation was therefore examined not as an isolated individual psychological capacity but as a process embedded within cultural values, social relationships, customary expectations, and everyday community practices.

The study was conducted in the Ammatoa Kajang Indigenous area, Kajang District, Bulukumba Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The research setting was selected because the customary values of Pasang ri Kajang continue to play an important role in organizing everyday life, social relationships, behavioral expectations, and interactions with the surrounding environment. Participants were recruited using purposive sampling, with an emphasis on selecting information-rich cases capable of providing detailed accounts of the phenomenon under investigation (Patton, 2014). The inclusion criteria were: (1) being a member of the Ammatoa Kajang Indigenous community; (2) living and participating in social life within the customary environment; (3) having knowledge of and experience in practicing the values of Pasang ri Kajang in everyday life; and (4) being willing to participate voluntarily in the study.

Six participants served as the primary participants. They were selected because their experiences were considered relevant to understanding how customary values were interpreted, internalized, and applied in regulating emotions, impulses, decisions, and behavior. Supporting informants from the participants' social environment were also involved to provide contextual information and to help confirm or complement the accounts provided by the primary participants. Consistent with qualitative inquiry, the study did not define a statistical population or seek statistical representativeness. Instead, participant selection was based on the relevance, depth, and richness of the information they could provide regarding the phenomenon being investigated (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2014).

The study used multiple sources of qualitative data, consisting primarily of in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with the primary participants to explore their lived experiences, interpretations, and strategies related to self-regulation within the cultural framework of Pasang ri Kajang. The interview guide was developed from the study's conceptual focus on self-regulation and culturally relevant values found in Pasang ri Kajang. Interview questions explored participants' experiences of managing emotions, controlling impulses, making decisions, responding to social situations, dealing with customary expectations, and adapting to changes associated with modernization. The semi-structured format allowed the researchers to maintain consistency across interviews while providing flexibility to pursue experiences and meanings that emerged during the conversations.

Direct observation was conducted to understand participants' behavior within their natural social and cultural environment. Observation focused on everyday activities, interpersonal interactions, behavioral patterns, and the ways in which customary values were expressed and practiced in community life. Observation was used not merely to record visible behavior but also to contextualize participants' narratives and identify connections between what participants described in interviews and what occurred in their everyday surroundings. Documentation was used as an additional source of contextual information and included field notes, research records, relevant written materials, and photographs of the research setting obtained with

participants' permission. The combination of interviews, observation, and documentation enabled the researchers to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and supported the triangulation of information across different sources.

Data collection and preliminary analysis were conducted concurrently. After each interview and observation session, the researchers reviewed the information obtained, identified emerging issues, and compared new data with previously collected data. This iterative process allowed the researchers to identify similarities, differences, recurring patterns, and potentially new dimensions of self-regulation. It also informed subsequent interviews and observations by enabling the researchers to explore emerging themes more deeply. Data collection continued until the information obtained became sufficiently rich and repetitive for addressing the research questions, with no substantively new themes emerging from subsequent data.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis following the approach proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006). The analysis began with familiarization with the data through repeated reading of interview transcripts, observation records, and field notes. The researchers then generated initial codes that captured meaningful aspects of participants' experiences and statements related to self-regulation and Pasang ri Kajang. Similar or conceptually related codes were subsequently grouped into preliminary themes. These themes were reviewed against the coded extracts and the complete dataset to ensure that they adequately represented the participants' experiences and remained consistent with the research focus. Then refined, defined, and named before developing the final analytical narrative. Throughout this process, the analysis was conducted recursively rather than as a strictly linear procedure. Interpretations were continuously compared with the original data and examined in relation to the cultural context of the Ammatoa Kajang community. Particular attention was given to the meanings participants attributed to customary values and to how those values were reflected in their processes of emotional management, impulse control, decision-making, behavioral adjustment, and responses to social change. The analysis therefore sought to preserve the participants' culturally situated meanings rather than interpreting their experiences solely through externally derived psychological concepts.

The trustworthiness of the findings was strengthened through source triangulation, member checking, and an audit trail. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from primary participants with information from supporting informants, as well as by comparing interview accounts with observations and relevant documentation. This process helped identify convergent and divergent information and reduced reliance on a single source of evidence. Member checking was conducted by returning relevant interview summaries and interpretations to participants to confirm whether the researchers' understanding accurately reflected their experiences and intended meanings. An audit trail was maintained throughout the research process by systematically documenting the stages of participant selection, data collection, coding, theme development, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The researchers also engaged in continuous reflexive consideration of their interpretations and their position in relation to the research setting. Such reflexivity was particularly important because the study examined culturally embedded meanings within an indigenous community. The researchers therefore sought to distinguish participants' meanings from their own assumptions and to ensure that interpretations remained grounded in the empirical data and the cultural context of Pasang ri Kajang.

Ethical considerations were addressed throughout all stages of the study. Before

data collection, the researchers obtained the necessary permission from relevant customary and institutional authorities and explained the purpose, procedures, potential benefits, and participants' rights in language that was understandable to them. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before interviews and observations were conducted. Participants were informed that they had the right to decline to answer particular questions or withdraw from the study at any time without negative consequences. Confidentiality was maintained by using participant codes or pseudonyms in research records and reporting. Data were used solely for academic and scientific purposes. Given the distinctive cultural norms and customary regulations of the Ammatoa Kajang community, the researchers also adopted a culturally sensitive approach throughout the research process. This included respecting customary boundaries, practices, social hierarchies, and community expectations, and avoiding questions or research activities that could potentially cause discomfort or conflict with local norms. The researchers treated the community not merely as a research setting but as a cultural context whose values and autonomy needed to be respected throughout the research process.

Results and discussion

Overview of findings

Analysis of interviews with six members of the Ammatoa Kajang Indigenous community revealed that self-regulation was deeply embedded in the internalization of Pasang ri Kajang. Rather than functioning merely as a set of external customary rules, Pasang ri Kajang appeared to operate as an internal moral and behavioral framework through which participants monitored their conduct, evaluated whether their actions were appropriate, and adjusted their behavior when necessary. The findings therefore indicate that self-regulation in the Ammatoa Kajang context is culturally situated and develops through the interaction between individual psychological processes, customary standards, social expectations, and the community's collective value system. Four major themes emerged from the thematic analysis: (1) adherence to custom, (2) cultural identity, (3) simplicity of life (kamase-masea), and (4) the impact of modernization. These themes describe the cultural context in which self-regulation develops and operates. Among them, adherence to custom was the most dominant theme, indicating that customary values remain the primary behavioral reference for participants. The distribution of the themes is presented in Table 1.

Table 1 distribution of research themes based on interview results

Nu.	Theme	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Adherence to custom	102	48.11
2	Cultural identity	42	19.81
3	Simplicity of life (kamase-masea)	41	19.34
4	Impact of modernization	27	12.74

Source: primary data, processed

As shown in Table 1, adherence to custom accounted for the largest proportion of coded statements (48.11%), followed by cultural identity (19.81%), simplicity of life or kamase-masea (19.34%), and the impact of modernization (12.74%). This distribution suggests that the participants' accounts were primarily organized around the obligation to maintain customary standards. At the same time, the relatively substantial presence of cultural identity and kamase-masea indicates that adherence to custom was not

experienced simply as obedience to external rules but was connected to participants' sense of who they were and how they ought to live. The modernization theme, although less dominant, is particularly important because it reveals the context in which individuals must negotiate between customary expectations and changing social conditions.

Adherence to custom

Adherence to custom emerged as the strongest theme in the participants' accounts. Participants consistently described Pasang ri Kajang as a fundamental reference for determining appropriate behavior, including dress, manners, interpersonal relations, decision-making, and responses to violations of customary rules. Respondents emphasized that individuals entering the customary area were expected to adjust their behavior to local norms. As Respondent 1 stated, "If someone wants to enter the area, there are certainly customary rules that visitors must follow." Respondent 2 similarly described the obligation to wear black clothing and remove footwear when entering the customary area. These practices indicate that customary regulation is visible in concrete behavioral routines and is reinforced through repeated social practice. The findings further demonstrate that adherence is supported by customary sanctions. Participants explained that violations may be reported to Ammatoa and followed by customary consequences. However, the data suggest that compliance cannot be reduced to fear of punishment. Respondent 3 indicated that adherence had been practiced since childhood and had become part of everyday life, while Respondents 5 and 6 emphasized the importance of acknowledging and correcting mistakes. This pattern suggests a transition from externally imposed regulation toward internalized regulation. In other words, customary rules initially operate as social standards but may become internal standards through long-term socialization.

This finding is consistent with Bandura's (1991) social cognitive theory, which proposes that self-regulation involves the continuous monitoring of behavior, evaluation against standards, and affective or behavioral responses to one's own performance. Bandura emphasizes that standards for self-evaluation can emerge from the social environment and become incorporated into the individual's self-regulatory system. In the Ammatoa Kajang context, Pasang ri Kajang appears to provide precisely such a culturally defined standard. The findings therefore extend the application of social cognitive theory by demonstrating how an indigenous customary system can function as a source of internal standards for self-regulation. The role of customary institutions is also important. Previous research has described Pasang as an unwritten normative system that guides community behavior, while Ammatoa has an important role in maintaining and transmitting these norms (Daniel et al., 2022). The present findings add a psychological dimension to this understanding: customary authority does not merely control behavior externally but contributes to the formation of internal behavioral standards (Wu & Dutton, 2026). Thus, adherence to custom can be interpreted as both a social-control mechanism and a culturally embedded self-regulatory process.

Cultural identity

The second major theme was cultural identity. Participants described Pasang ri Kajang not simply as a set of rules but as an essential component of being Kajang. This identity was expressed through traditional clothing, the Konjo language, social cooperation, respect for elders, environmental responsibility, and attachment to Ammatoa as a symbol of customary continuity. Respondent 1, for example, described

returning to Kajang after studying outside the region and using knowledge acquired outside the community to contribute to the preservation of Kajang culture. This experience illustrates that exposure to external environments does not necessarily eliminate cultural identity. Instead, cultural identity may become more consciously recognized when individuals encounter alternative cultural systems. The symbolic dimension of identity was particularly evident in participants' descriptions of black clothing. Participants associated traditional clothing with moral meanings such as honesty, purity, equality, and simplicity. Cultural identity therefore operated at both symbolic and behavioral levels. It was visible through cultural markers but was simultaneously reflected in everyday conduct. Similarly, participants described mutual assistance, careful speech, and respect for others as expressions of being Kajang. These findings indicate that cultural identity is not merely a category of group membership but a framework that provides behavioral expectations.

This finding is consistent with previous research showing that cultural symbols and everyday practices are important mechanisms for maintaining the identity of the Ammatoa Kajang community (Nongko et al., 2026). Research on the community's customary institutions also indicates that Pasang continues to function as a behavioral and cultural reference despite the pressures of modern development (Hafid et al., 2023). The present study extends these findings by suggesting that cultural identity may serve as a psychological resource for self-regulation (Mustafa, 2025). When individuals perceive customary values as part of their identity, compliance with those values may become less dependent on external surveillance because behavior is regulated according to an internalized sense of who they are. This interpretation is particularly relevant to understanding the statement of Respondent 1 that "I am still a Kajang person" despite having experienced life outside the customary area. The statement illustrates that exposure to other environments does not necessarily produce cultural disengagement. Instead, cultural identity can provide continuity and a stable reference point for evaluating new experiences. In this sense, identity and self-regulation are mutually reinforcing: cultural identity provides the standards for behavior, while consistent behavior reinforces the individual's identification with the community.

Simplicity of life (kamase-masea)

The third theme, kamase-masea, provides a particularly important explanation of how self-regulation operates in everyday life. Participants consistently described simplicity not as deprivation but as a disciplined way of living characterized by gratitude, moderation, humility, and avoidance of excess. The principle was reflected in clothing, housing, household facilities, interpersonal behavior, and consumption. Respondent 1 described kamase-masea as learning to be grateful even when one has little, while Respondents 2 and 4 emphasized that even individuals with greater economic resources should maintain simple houses and avoid displaying wealth. The findings suggest that kamase-masea functions as a culturally specific mechanism for regulating desires and social comparison. Individuals are encouraged not to pursue excessive material accumulation or demonstrate social superiority. Respondent 3 associated this way of life with a sense of peace because there was less pressure to display wealth, while Respondent 4 emphasized humility regardless of economic status. Thus, simplicity is not merely a visible cultural practice; it involves psychological regulation of desire, aspiration, and self-presentation.

This interpretation is supported by previous research on Ammatoa Kajang. Ridhoh & Alfian (2025) describes kamase-masea as a fundamental principle of life that

regulates relationships among humans, God, and nature and is reflected in simple housing, clothing, and everyday practices. Previous research has documented restrictions on modern facilities and the deliberate maintenance of simple lifestyles as expressions of the community's cultural values likewise (Ningrum & Abdullah, 2025). The present study contributes to this literature by interpreting these practices through a psychological lens: simplicity can be understood as an everyday self-regulatory strategy that limits excessive desire and maintains consistency between personal behavior and collective moral standards (Ozhiganova, 2018). From Bandura's (1991) perspective, self-regulation requires individuals to evaluate their behavior against standards and regulate subsequent action accordingly. Kamase-masea provides such a standard by establishing culturally meaningful boundaries concerning what constitutes "enough," appropriate consumption, and acceptable self-presentation. The value therefore operates not only as a cultural ideal but also as a mechanism for regulating motivation and behavior. In this context, self-control is not primarily directed toward achieving greater material acquisition but toward maintaining harmony, modesty, gratitude, and conformity with customary principles.

The impact of modernization

The fourth theme concerned the impact of modernization. Participants described increased access to formal education, mobility, contact with outsiders, infrastructure, and technological development. Nevertheless, modernization was not described as a process that simply replaced customary values. Rather, participants portrayed it as something that required selective adaptation. Respondent 1 described the tension between "culture and modernity," while also explaining his decision to return to Kajang and remain involved in cultural preservation. Respondents 2 and 3 described increasing participation in formal education and greater interaction with people outside the customary area. Respondents 4–6 similarly described changes in mobility, visitors, transportation, and interactions with external institutions. These findings indicate that modernization creates a regulatory challenge because individuals are exposed to behavioral possibilities that may not always correspond with customary expectations. The important finding, however, is that participants did not describe adaptation as unconditional acceptance of modern practices. Instead, Pasang ri Kajang continued to function as a filtering mechanism through which new behaviors were evaluated. Modern practices could be accepted when they were considered compatible with customary principles, whereas practices perceived as inconsistent with Pasang remained restricted.

This finding is consistent with previous studies describing the Ammatoa Kajang community as maintaining customary institutions while simultaneously negotiating modern development (Zainuddin et al., 2023). Research on kamase-masea has similarly shown that the community limits the penetration of modernization in order to preserve its cultural system. More recent work also suggests that modernization and globalization have created challenges for the continuity of traditional values and educational practices within the community (Rahman & Azzahra, 2024). The present findings add that this negotiation is also a psychological process: individuals must continuously monitor external influences, evaluate their compatibility with customary standards, and adjust their behavior accordingly (Anom & Rasanjani, 2026). From the perspective of social cognitive theory, this process illustrates the reciprocal relationship between personal factors, behavior, and environmental conditions (Bandura, 1986, 1989, 1991). Modernization changes the environment by increasing exposure to new information and behavioral models, while internalized customary values influence how individuals

interpret and respond to those influences. Consequently, self-regulation becomes an important mechanism through which cultural continuity can be maintained without requiring complete isolation from social change.

Self-regulation through Pasang ri Kajang

The four themes described above provide the cultural context within which self-regulation occurs. When interpreted directly through Bandura's (1991) framework, the findings reveal three interconnected self-regulatory processes: self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction. Bandura conceptualizes these as central mechanisms through which individuals monitor their behavior, evaluate it against standards, and respond affectively or behaviorally to the results of that evaluation. In the Ammatoa Kajang community, Pasang ri Kajang provides the culturally specific standards through which these three processes operate. Self-observation refers to the individual's monitoring of behavior, its determinants, and its consequences (Bandura, 1991). The findings indicate that participants routinely monitored their conduct in relation to Pasang ri Kajang. Respondent 4 explained that decisions should first be considered in relation to the applicable pasang, while Respondent 5 emphasized being careful because he understood the consequences of violating customary rules. These accounts demonstrate that behavioral monitoring occurs before or during action, rather than only after a violation has taken place.

Self-observation was particularly visible in situations involving customary boundaries. Individuals entering the customary area were expected to consciously adjust their clothing, footwear, speech, and behavior. This indicates that self-monitoring is reinforced through environmental cues and social expectations. The individual becomes aware of how he or she is behaving because the cultural environment provides clear standards for appropriate conduct. This finding supports Bandura's (1991) proposition that self-monitoring constitutes the first component of self-regulation. However, the present study demonstrates that the content of self-monitoring is culturally specific. In the Ammatoa Kajang context, individuals do not merely ask whether their behavior is personally desirable; they consider whether it is consistent with Pasang ri Kajang. Thus, the cultural value system determines what aspects of behavior become salient for self-monitoring.

Self-judgment occurs when individuals evaluate their behavior against personal standards and environmental expectations (Bandura, 1991). In the present study, Pasang ri Kajang functioned as the primary evaluative standard. Participants described feeling that an action was "wrong" when it contradicted customary principles, even when no immediate external sanction was present. Respondent 6, for example, explained that making a mistake required acknowledgment and correction and that failing to follow customary rules produced a sense of uneasiness. This finding suggests that customary standards have become internalized to the extent that individuals can evaluate their own behavior independently of direct external supervision. The emergence of discomfort or guilt following perceived violations indicates the affective dimension of self-judgment. The individual is not simply concerned about being punished; the violation itself is experienced as inconsistent with what the person believes to be right. The finding is important because it differentiates external compliance from internalized self-regulation. Customary sanctions undoubtedly contribute to behavioral control, but participants' narratives indicate that sanctions are only one part of the regulatory system. Through repeated socialization, customary values become internal criteria for judging one's own conduct. This is consistent with

Bandura's (1991) argument that self-regulatory processes involve evaluative standards that can become internalized and influence behavior even without immediate external control.

Self-reaction refers to the individual's affective and behavioral response following self-evaluation. The findings indicate two principal forms of self-reaction among participants: maintaining behavior that is considered consistent with Pasang ri Kajang and correcting behavior perceived as inconsistent with customary standards. Participants described admitting mistakes, accepting consequences, and modifying behavior to avoid repeating violations. Respondent 6 emphasized the obligation to accept customary sanctions when a violation occurs, while Respondent 5 described deliberately avoiding violations by following customary rules. These accounts demonstrate that self-reaction can operate both retrospectively and prospectively. Retrospectively, individuals respond to a perceived violation by acknowledging and correcting it. Prospectively, awareness of possible consequences encourages individuals to regulate future behavior before a violation occurs. The experience of Respondent 1, who described the coexistence of "culture and modernity," further illustrates the complexity of self-reaction under conditions of social change. In this situation, the individual is required to negotiate between competing behavioral possibilities and determine which responses remain compatible with cultural identity. Self-reaction therefore extends beyond correcting explicit violations; it also involves ongoing adjustment to changing circumstances while preserving core cultural standards.

Integrated interpretation

Taken together, the findings indicate that self-regulation among members of the Ammatoa Kajang community is best understood as a culturally embedded process rather than an exclusively individual psychological capacity. Pasang ri Kajang provides the standards, kamase-masea provides a framework for regulating desires and consumption, cultural identity provides a sense of continuity and belonging, and customary institutions provide social reinforcement and consequences. These elements interact to shape how individuals monitor, evaluate, and regulate their behavior. The findings can therefore be represented as a culturally embedded self-regulatory cycle. Individuals first observe their behavior in relation to customary expectations; they then judge whether the behavior is consistent with Pasang ri Kajang; and finally, they react by maintaining, correcting, or adjusting their behavior. This process is continuously reinforced by social interaction, customary leadership, cultural identity, and everyday practices. In this sense, Pasang ri Kajang operates simultaneously as a cultural value system, a moral standard, and a psychological reference point for self-regulation.

This interpretation extends previous studies of the Ammatoa Kajang community. Earlier research primarily demonstrated the importance of Pasang ri Kajang for social order, environmental conservation, cultural identity, and the preservation of kamase-masea (Haq et al., 2024; Ismail et al., 2026; Latief & Syam, 2022; Nongko et al., 2026). The present study adds an individual psychological dimension by demonstrating how these collective cultural values are translated into processes of self-monitoring, self-evaluation, emotional response, and behavioral adjustment. In other words, the findings move the discussion from "how custom regulates the community" toward "how individuals regulate themselves through internalized custom." The findings also provide an important perspective on modernization. Rather than depicting modernization as necessarily resulting in the disappearance of indigenous values, the participants' experiences suggest a process of selective cultural negotiation. Individuals encounter

new environments and behavioral alternatives but continue to use Pasang ri Kajang as an evaluative framework. This process illustrates Bandura's (1986, 1989, 1991) view that human behavior emerges through reciprocal interaction among personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. In the Ammatoa Kajang context, cultural values constitute a particularly important personal and social resource that enables individuals to respond to environmental change while maintaining continuity with their cultural identity.

Overall, the study demonstrates that the integration of personal monitoring, moral evaluation, affective response, cultural identity, and customary social control characterizes self-regulation within the Ammatoa Kajang community. The dominant role of adherence to custom, together with the substantial presence of cultural identity and *kamase-masea*, indicates that self-regulation is deeply connected to the community's collective worldview. The impact of modernization further demonstrates that self-regulation becomes particularly important when individuals encounter competing values and changing social environments. Thus, Pasang ri Kajang can be understood not merely as an inherited cultural tradition but as a living psychological and social framework through which individuals organize their everyday conduct, maintain cultural continuity, and negotiate social change.

Conclusions

This study concludes that self-regulation among members of the Ammatoa Kajang Indigenous community is deeply rooted in the internalization of Pasang ri Kajang as a culturally embedded system of moral and behavioral standards. The findings identified four interconnected themes: adherence to custom, cultural identity, simplicity of life (*kamase-masea*), and the impact of modernization, which collectively illustrate the cultural context in which self-regulation develops. In particular, self-regulation was reflected through three interconnected processes consistent with Bandura's social cognitive theory: self-observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction. Participants monitored their behavior according to customary expectations, evaluated their actions against the values of Pasang ri Kajang, and responded by maintaining, correcting, or adjusting their behavior when necessary. The findings indicate that self-regulation in this community is not primarily an isolated individual capacity but a culturally situated process shaped by internalized values, social expectations, customary authority, and everyday cultural practices.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of culturally grounded and indigenous psychology by extending the understanding of self-regulation beyond predominantly individualistic and decontextualized psychological perspectives. The findings demonstrate that an indigenous value system such as Pasang ri Kajang can function as an internal psychological reference that guides emotional management, impulse control, decision-making, behavioral adjustment, and responses to social change. The study therefore provides an empirical link between Bandura's social cognitive theory and indigenous cultural knowledge, showing how self-regulatory processes may be constructed through collective moral standards and cultural identity. Practically, the findings may inform psychologists, educators, researchers, policymakers, and community practitioners in developing culturally sensitive interventions and educational approaches that recognize local values as psychological resources rather than treating indigenous communities solely through externally derived frameworks. More broadly, the study highlights the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge into the development of psychological theory and practice in Indonesia.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study involved only six primary participants from one indigenous community, meaning that the findings are context-specific and should not be generalized statistically to other indigenous populations. Second, the qualitative case study design relied substantially on participants' narratives and researchers' interpretations, which may have been influenced by participants' subjective accounts and the researchers' positionality. Third, the study focused primarily on the Ammatoa Kajang customary context and did not systematically compare self-regulation across different generations, gender groups, levels of education, or degrees of exposure to modernization. Future research should therefore involve a larger and more diverse range of participants and examine differences across age groups, generations, gender, educational backgrounds, and levels of interaction with the outside world. Comparative studies involving other indigenous communities in Indonesia may also provide insight into whether similar culturally grounded mechanisms of self-regulation exist in different cultural settings. In addition, future research could employ longitudinal or mixed-method designs to examine how the internalization of *Pasang ri Kajang* develops over time and how self-regulation changes as individuals increasingly encounter modernization, formal education, and digital technology.

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