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THE MAROSOK TRADITION AS AN EDUCATIONAL MEDIUM FOR LIVESTOCK BUSINESS ETHICS AND TRUST-BASED MARKETING: AN INTERCULTURAL LEARNING APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

The Marosok tradition is a trust-based livestock trading system of the Minangkabau community, serving as a culturally rooted medium for teaching business ethics and marketing models. This program was conducted under the International Summer School at Mulawarman University and aimed to enhance participants' understanding of ethical negotiation, local wisdom, and its relevance to contemporary markets. A total of 38 students, comprising 25 international and 13 local students representing diverse academic disciplines, participated in a series of activities, including orientation, thematic lectures, intercultural discussions, role-play simulations, and reflective evaluations. Using a participatory and qualitative-descriptive approach, data were collected through pre- and post-tests, Likert-scale questionnaires, and focus group discussions, and analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic interpretation. Results indicated a 34.9% increase in participants' knowledge, particularly in understanding Marosok's historical context, ethical principles, and non-verbal negotiation mechanisms. With 86% reporting high or very high interest, this increase was primarily attributed to the cultural uniqueness and practical applicability of the material. The multicultural composition of the cohort enriched dialogue, fostered cross-cultural understanding, and stimulated critical reflection on integrating traditional values into modern business contexts. Despite these achievements, challenges included participants' varying baseline knowledge, limited exposure to trust-based trade systems, and the short duration of the program. It is recommended that future programs extend opportunities for practice, incorporate digital learning tools, and explore applications of Marosok principles in contemporary market platforms to strengthen cultural preservation and educational impact.

Keywords: Marosok tradition; business ethics; local wisdom; intercultural education; livestock marketing

ABSTRAK

Tradisi Marosok merupakan sistem perdagangan ternak berbasis kepercayaan dalam komunitas Minangkabau, yang berfungsi sebagai medium budaya untuk mengajarkan etika bisnis dan model pemasaran. Program ini dilaksanakan dalam kerangka International Summer School di Universitas Mulawarman

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dengan tujuan meningkatkan pemahaman peserta mengenai negosiasi etis, kearifan lokal, serta relevansinya dengan pasar kontemporer. Sebanyak 38 mahasiswa yang terdiri dari 25 mahasiswa internasional dan 13 mahasiswa lokal dari berbagai disiplin ilmu berpartisipasi dalam rangkaian kegiatan, meliputi orientasi, materi tematik, diskusi lintas budaya, simulasi peran, dan evaluasi reflektif. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan partisipatif dan kualitatif-deskriptif, data dikumpulkan melalui pre-test dan post-test, kuesioner skala Likert, serta diskusi kelompok terfokus (FGD), kemudian dianalisis dengan statistik deskriptif dan interpretasi tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peningkatan pengetahuan sebesar 34,9%, khususnya dalam memahami konteks historis Marosok, prinsip-prinsip etika, dan mekanisme negosiasi non-verbal. Sebanyak 86% peserta menyatakan minat tinggi atau sangat tinggi, yang terutama dipengaruhi oleh keunikan budaya dan relevansi praktis dari materi. Komposisi multikultural peserta memperkaya dialog, memperkuat pemahaman lintas budaya, serta mendorong refleksi kritis mengenai integrasi nilai-nilai tradisional ke dalam konteks bisnis modern. Meskipun demikian, terdapat sejumlah tantangan, antara lain perbedaan pengetahuan dasar peserta, keterbatasan paparan terhadap sistem perdagangan berbasis kepercayaan, serta durasi program yang relatif singkat. Oleh karena itu, disarankan agar program di masa mendatang memperluas kesempatan praktik, mengintegrasikan perangkat pembelajaran digital, serta mengeksplorasi penerapan prinsip-prinsip Marosok dalam platform pasar kontemporer untuk memperkuat pelestarian budaya dan dampak edukatif.

Kata Kunci: Tradisi Marosok; etika bisnis; kearifan lokal; pendidikan lintas budaya; pemasaran ternak

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country renowned for its rich cultural diversity and abundant local wisdom, including in grassroots economic practices that thrive within the agricultural and livestock sectors. One particularly unique and educationally valuable form of local wisdom, especially in the context of business ethics and marketing, is the Marosok tradition, a customary livestock trading system practised by the Minangkabau community in West Sumatra. In its implementation, Marosok is conducted without verbal negotiation of prices; instead, transactions occur through coded hand signals performed discreetly beneath a sarong. This mechanism symbolizes and reinforces core values, such as trust, fairness, integrity, and social justice, in economic exchange. The tradition has been passed down for generations. It continues to be practised in livestock markets, such as those in Batusangkar and Payakumbuh, which remain among the most significant livestock trade centres in the region (Siska et al., 2025; Rhizky & Asrita, 2024).

According to data from Statistics Indonesia (2023), smallholder farmers account for 87.9% of the national cattle population, indicating the significant dominance of community-based livestock production in the country. Consequently, traditional transaction systems, such as Marosok, continue to play a vital role within the domestic market structure, especially in determining prices based on flexible social agreements rather than formal corporate mechanisms. Outside the scope of corporate agribusiness, such localized mechanisms remain relevant and hold considerable potential as alternative learning models for developing more ethical and community-oriented marketing systems. As noted by Hapsari et al. (2025), strategies for strengthening the capacity of smallholder farmers to face global market pressures should not rely solely on technological advancements or financial capital. However, they must also incorporate cultural capital, namely local knowledge and the social values embedded in community economic practices.

As globalization accelerates and the world transitions into the Fifth Industrial Revolution

(Industry 5.0), higher education systems are increasingly required to move beyond purely technical and technological dimensions. Instead, there is a growing imperative to integrate ethical and socio-cultural perspectives into curricula. This becomes especially pertinent when students from modern educational backgrounds are introduced to traditional economic contexts grounded in social trust and cultural symbolism. The Marosok tradition, which relies heavily on non-verbal communication in price negotiation, offers a highly contextual and reflective medium for exploring business ethics in practice (Qamara et al., 2025). In addition to broadening intellectual horizons, such engagements facilitate intercultural dialogue and foster a deeper appreciation of local economic dynamics that are often overlooked in mainstream academic discourse.

As part of the International Summer School Program hosted by Mulawarman University, this community service activity was designed using an educational and participatory approach, combining a conceptual introduction with direct field experience (Widiarta et al., 2025). The program was conducted in collaboration with the Agricultural Human Resources Development and Extension Agency East Kalimantan, an institution recognized for its expertise in vocational training in the agricultural and livestock sectors. The choice of location was not only thematically appropriate but also socioeconomically relevant, as farming and livestock communities in East Kalimantan exhibit collective characteristics and community-based economic patterns that align with the principles of Minangkabau economic culture.

Theoretically, this initiative supports the concept of glocalization in higher education, which involves integrating global knowledge with local wisdom within the learning process. As emphasized by UNESCO (2022), heritage-based learning plays a critical role in fostering cross-cultural awareness, character development, and social responsibility among

students. The World Bank (2021) has highlighted that local values embedded within agrarian communities can serve as foundational elements for sustainable social innovation, particularly in resource-based economic sectors such as agriculture and livestock.

The present community service aims to introduce and critically examine the Marosok tradition as both a traditional marketing model and an educational tool for business ethics grounded in local wisdom, targeted toward participants of the International Summer School. The program was not merely designed to transmit information, but also to create interactive learning experiences that enable participants to engage with local economic practices, cultivate cultural empathy, and reflect critically on the ethical dimensions of business conduct. This article documents the implementation of the program, the methodological approach, participant engagement, and the program outcomes within the broader framework of cross-cultural education and the preservation of Indonesia's local values.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This community service utilized a qualitative-descriptive and participatory method, grounded in transformative learning and culturally responsive pedagogy, as advocated by Gay (2018) and Mezirow (2018) theory of experiential education. The approach was selected to foster ethical reflection, intercultural dialogue, and a contextual understanding of Marosok, a Minangkabau livestock trading tradition rooted in trust and non-verbal communication.

a. Location and Participants

The activity was conducted at the Agricultural Extension, Human Resources, and Development Centre in East Kalimantan. This site was strategically selected due to its institutional role as a regional hub for capacity building in agriculture and livestock, its experience in facilitating participatory training

programs, and its close engagement with community-based farming systems that emphasize collective values and trust-based practices. These characteristics align with the educational objectives of introducing Marosok as a culturally grounded model of ethical livestock marketing. The program involved 38 participants, consisting of 25 international students (from Myanmar, Malaysia, Ghana, Guinea, Tanzania, Pakistan, Thailand, Egypt, Algeria, India, Sri Lanka, and South Sudan) and 13 students from Mulawarman University, Indonesia. This intercultural composition enabled rich comparative analysis of traditional ethics and marketing perspectives (Ostonovich & Khudayberdievich, 2025).

b. Activity Flow and Learning Stages

The service project followed four integrative stages, each designed to promote experiential and reflective learning:

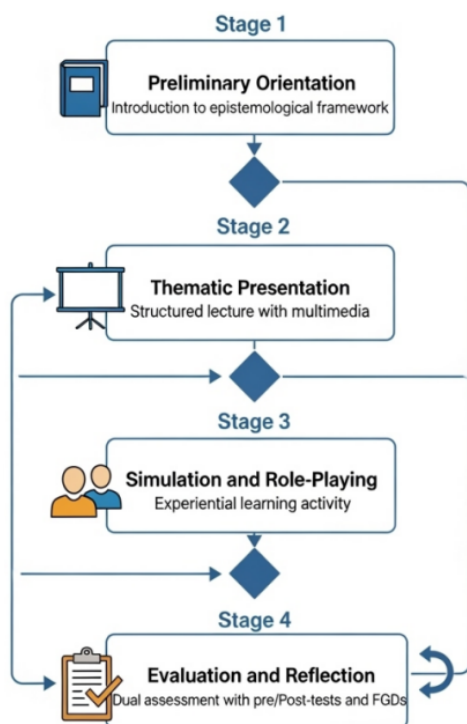


Figure 1. Flow of Community Service Activities

(Source: Author, 2025)

1. Preliminary Orientation: Introduction to the concept of local wisdom as a moral compass in business practices. Materials included brief readings and open

discussions to establish a shared epistemological foundation (Tumuyu & Subehi, 2025).

2. Thematic Presentation: Delivery of structured lectures on Marosok, supported by ethnographic videos and visual presentations that demonstrated the symbolic gestures and silent negotiation typical of the tradition
3. Simulation and Role Play: Participants engaged in simulations of livestock transactions using Marosok principles. Grouped interculturally, they acted as buyers and sellers, negotiating without speech. This method enhanced intercultural empathy and ethical sensitivity (Ernawati et al., 2024).
4. Evaluation and Reflection: The assessment included pre and post-tests, open-ended questionnaires, and focus group discussions (FGDs) to capture changes in knowledge and participants' critical reflections.

c. Instruments and Data Collection Techniques

The instruments employed in this community service were meticulously designed to align with participatory and transformative learning approaches. Key instruments included bilingual educational modules (in Indonesian and English), visual presentation, ethnographic documentary videos, and culturally contextualized simulation kits, such as role-play guides that reflected the traditional practice of Marosok. To assess learning outcomes, pre-test and post-test evaluation forms, open-ended questionnaires, and guidelines for focus group discussions (FGDs) were developed. Data collection techniques comprised both qualitative and quantitative methods. Participant observation was conducted during the activity sessions to capture interaction patterns, supported by systematic field notes and reflective interviews that explored the participants' interpretations of the cultural and ethical values embedded in Marosok. This

methodological combination is consistent with Köhler et al. (2025) recommendation for using mixed methods in exploratory field-based studies to foster a comprehensive understanding of participant learning experiences.

d. Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis combined descriptive, quantitative, and qualitative thematic approaches. Quantitative data from the pre- and post-tests were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean scores, percentage changes, and learning gain indices, to assess participants' cognitive improvement (Huber et al., 2024). Qualitative data from focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis following the Braun and Clarke framework, involving data familiarization, inductive coding, theme development, and refinement. Key themes were identified from recurring patterns in participants' reflections on ethical values, trust, reciprocity, and intercultural learning embedded in the Marosok practice. This integrated approach enabled contextually grounded interpretations and supported the development of culturally responsive ethical education frameworks (Savin-Baden & Major, 2023).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Participant Profile

The community service activity engaged a total of 38 student participants, consisting of 25 international students and 13 local students from Universitas Mulawarman. The participants represented a wide range of academic disciplines. This multidisciplinary composition created an intellectually rich environment that facilitated the exchange of diverse perspectives, thereby enhancing the depth and breadth of the program's learning process.



Figure 2. Participant of Summer School (SUNTROPiS) 2025

(Source : Author, 2025)

The inclusion of participants from multiple academic fields not only promoted interdisciplinary dialogue but also supported the integration of technical, socio-economic, and cultural dimensions in the discussion of Marosok as a traditional, trust-based economic system, an approach consistent with recent findings on the value of multidisciplinary engagement in community-based education (Jaiswal et al., 2024).



Figure 3. Participant of Summer School (SUNTROPiS) 2025

(Source : Author, 2025)

The multicultural dimension of the cohort further amplified the program's educational value. The international participants hailed from Myanmar, Ghana, Malaysia, Pakistan, Egypt, South Sudan, Guinea, Tanzania, Thailand, Algeria, India, and Sri Lanka, bringing with them distinct cultural frameworks, socio-economic experiences, and

communication norms. This diversity provided fertile ground for cross-cultural comparisons and critical reflection on ethical business practices, fostering a global perspective in understanding the relevance and adaptability of local wisdom traditions. As demonstrated by Jiang et al. (2023), culturally heterogeneous learning groups are particularly effective in generating dialogic learning processes that challenge preconceived notions and broaden participants' worldviews.

The heterogeneity in both academic and cultural backgrounds necessitated a pedagogical approach that was inclusive, adaptable, and culturally responsive. Facilitators designed and delivered instructional materials to be accessible to students with varying levels of familiarity with agricultural and economic concepts while respecting cultural sensitivities and linguistic diversity. This instructional flexibility aligns with the study by Maulani et al. (2024), who emphasize that culturally responsive teaching strategies are crucial for enhancing engagement and ensuring equitable participation in diverse educational settings. Consequently, the program served not only as a platform for skill and knowledge development but also as a catalyst for intercultural competence, a vital attribute in the increasingly interconnected global landscape.

b. Implementation of the Program

The implementation of the community service program in Payakumbuh was designed to integrate participatory and transformative learning principles, aiming to enhance community capacity in understanding, practicing, and preserving Marosok, a traditional, trust-based cattle trading system. The activity sequence was methodically structured into orientation, material delivery, participatory discussion, practical simulations, and evaluation, ensuring that both cognitive and experiential learning dimensions were addressed (Ashrafova, 2024). The integration of these phases allowed participants not only to acquire theoretical knowledge but also to

actively apply and reflect on the cultural, ethical, and economic significance of Marosok within a modern context.

The orientation stage served as an introductory platform, wherein participants were familiarized with the objectives, relevance, and expected outcomes of the program. Facilitators presented an overview of Marosok as both an intangible cultural heritage and a functioning rural economic practice, emphasizing its relevance to ethical trading, social cohesion, and sustainable livestock market operations. This session also outlined the program's intercultural and multidisciplinary nature, given the participation of both local and international students from diverse academic backgrounds (Akintayo et al., 2024). The deliberate framing of Marosok within broader socio-economic and cultural discourses provided participants with an initial framework to engage in informed discussions throughout the program.



Figure 4. Orientation Session with Participants

(Source : Author, 2025)

The material delivery phase incorporated bilingual learning modules (in Indonesian and English), visual presentations, and

ethnographic documentary videos that captured the historical evolution of Marosok. Content focused on negotiation ethics, livestock quality assessment, basic animal health management, and strategies for market access optimization.



Figure 5. Demonstration of Traditional Marosok Handshake Negotiation
(Source : Author, 2025)

The inclusion of value chain analysis enabled participants to contextualize Marosok within contemporary market systems, identifying potential pathways for adaptation while preserving its traditional principles (Lin et al., 2024). By combining historical narratives with practical economic perspectives, this stage promoted interdisciplinary integration between cultural studies, economics, and agricultural sciences.

The participatory discussion phase acted as a dialogic bridge between theory and lived experience. Local traders, serving as cultural informants, shared firsthand accounts of conducting transactions through non-verbal coded handshakes, while international participants contributed comparative examples from their cultural trading systems. Such exchanges fostered cross-cultural analysis, enabling participants to identify common ethical threads in global commerce and to critically evaluate differences in negotiation practices. As Sekhar (2024) emphasizes, culturally heterogeneous learning environments enhance participants' capacity to challenge preconceptions, negotiate meaning, and develop culturally adaptive competencies.

Practical simulations formed the core experiential component of the program, where participants engaged in role-play activities as

buyers and sellers within a Marosok setting. Simulations involved the precise enactment of silent handshake negotiations, followed by reflective debriefings to unpack the socio-cultural logic and trust mechanisms embedded in the practice. This hands-on approach was particularly impactful for participants without prior agricultural experience, as it provided an embodied understanding of Marosok's operational nuances (Hipolito, 2024). The simulation process also revealed how physical gestures and subtle tactile cues function as an encrypted communication system, thereby safeguarding confidentiality and trust in transactions.

The evaluation phase employed a mixed-method approach, incorporating pre- and post-tests, open-ended questionnaires, and focus group discussions. Quantitative results indicated a measurable increase in knowledge regarding Marosok's historical origins, procedural rules, and socio-economic functions. Qualitative findings, derived from thematic analysis of focus group discussions, revealed a heightened appreciation for the cultural and ethical dimensions of trust-based economic systems. Participants also expressed interest in exploring how Marosok principles could be integrated into contemporary market platforms, including digital livestock trading systems, while retaining their relational and trust-centered core (Akintayo et al., 2024).

The program's implementation yielded multidimensional benefits. Culturally, it contributed to safeguarding a practice under pressure from rapid commercialization and the homogenization of trade systems. Socially, it promoted intercultural dialogue and strengthened local and international networks of cultural advocates. Economically, it highlighted the potential for Marosok to serve as a model for low-cost, trust-enhanced trade systems in rural economies, reinforcing the role of social capital as a driver of market efficiency (Lin et al., 2024). The structured, participatory, and culturally grounded methodology ensured that the program not only transmitted knowledge but also cultivated

skills and attitudes essential for preserving intangible heritage in a globalized world.

c. Measurement of Participants' Interest and Knowledge

The evaluation of the community service program's impact was systematically conducted using two complementary indicators: (1) participants' interest level, assessed through a post-program Likert scale survey, and (2) knowledge acquisition, measured through a structured pretest–posttest design. This mixed-method assessment framework provided a comprehensive analysis of both affective and cognitive learning domains, ensuring that the evaluation captured not only the transfer of knowledge but also the degree of sustained engagement and motivation among participants. Such an approach aligns with contemporary standards in participatory learning assessment, which emphasize the integration of both emotional and intellectual dimensions for a holistic understanding of program effectiveness (Ivankova et al., 2018).

The measurement of participants' interest was conducted after the program through a five-point Likert scale questionnaire, which served to capture perceptions across several dimensions. Specifically, the instrument examined: (1) the perceived relevance of the Marosok tradition to contemporary ethical business practices, (2) its cultural uniqueness and heritage value, (3) the applicability of acquired knowledge in professional or entrepreneurial contexts, and (4) the perceived effectiveness of instructional strategies, particularly the use of simulation and role-play activities.

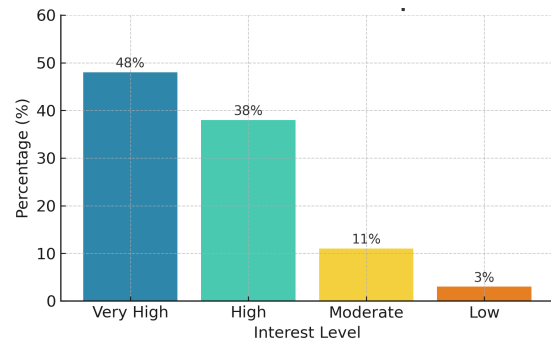


Figure 6. Distribution of Participants' Interest Levels

(Source : Primary Data Analysis, 2025)

The results demonstrated a highly favorable distribution of interest levels, with 48% of participants rating their interest as very high, 38% as high, 11% as moderate, and only 3% as low. This dominant presence of high and very high ratings underscores the strong motivational effect of integrating culturally grounded, experiential learning methods into community engagement programs. Previous studies have reported similar findings, noting that contextualizing learning content within local cultural frameworks significantly boosts learner engagement, particularly in cross-disciplinary and intercultural training environments (Prajapati et al., 2025; Lin et al., 2024).

The strong positive interest ratings suggest that the program design effectively bridged the gap between theoretical concepts and practical, culturally relevant applications. By embedding Marosok, a traditional trust-based negotiation system, into the training framework, participants could perceive its contemporary relevance, thereby fostering a more profound sense of connection and applicability in both academic and professional contexts. Such integration of cultural heritage into applied learning not only preserves local wisdom but also enriches the participants' capacity for ethical and culturally sensitive decision-making in future entrepreneurial or community development endeavors (Ahmar & Azzajjad, 2025).

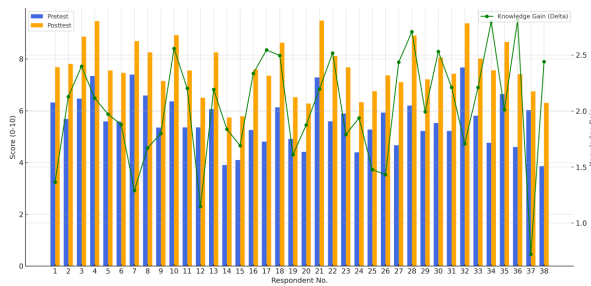


Figure 7. Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Scores with Knowledge Gain
(Source : Primary Data Analysis, 2025)

The cognitive impact of the program was measured using a one-group pretest–posttest design. The test consisted of ten questions, presented in both multiple-choice and short-answer formats, focusing on key aspects of Marosok, including its historical origins, ethical principles, symbolic elements, and trust-based negotiation mechanisms. Prior to the program, the average pretest score was 5.82 out of 10, indicating a moderate baseline knowledge level. Upon completion, the average posttest score increased to 7.85, representing a 34.9% improvement in knowledge acquisition. This notable gain demonstrates the program’s effectiveness in delivering content that combines theoretical understanding with practical application, particularly through role-play and scenario-based simulations (Prajapati et al., 2025).

The knowledge gain (delta) analysis revealed that participants from non-agricultural disciplines such as engineering, economics, and public health exhibited higher relative improvements compared to those from agricultural backgrounds. This suggests that the novelty of the subject matter significantly influenced their learning curve, a trend similarly observed in intercultural capacity-building programs (Ahmar & Azzajjad, 2025). The most substantial improvement was observed in participants’ comprehension of non-verbal negotiation cues and their ethical implications in modern market contexts, indicating that experiential methods foster deeper cognitive retention (Lin et al., 2024).

d. Challenges and Barriers in Implementation

The implementation of the community service program centered on the Marosok tradition, while offering substantial opportunities for preserving cultural heritage and promoting its relevance in contemporary ethical business practices, was not without challenges. One of the most prominent barriers was the disparity in participants’ baseline knowledge and familiarity with Marosok. The program brought together an intercultural cohort of international and local students from diverse academic disciplines, including agriculture, engineering, economics, public health, and veterinary medicine. This diversity, while enriching discussions, also created an uneven starting point in terms of understanding the cultural, historical, and ethical foundations of Marosok, requiring facilitators to adapt instructional materials to accommodate multiple levels of prior knowledge (Nguyen et al., 2023).

Another significant challenge was the limited prior exposure of participants, particularly those from non-agricultural fields, to trust-based, non-verbal negotiation mechanisms. Many initially perceived the symbolic and ethical values embedded in Marosok as abstract cultural artifacts rather than as frameworks with tangible applications in entrepreneurship or professional contexts. Addressing this required the use of targeted pedagogical strategies, including role-play simulations, visual demonstrations, and comparative cultural analyses, which helped bridge the gap between traditional practices and participants’ professional contexts (Adegbite et al., 2020; Suryani et al., 2026).

Social dynamics within the group also presented barriers to full participation. As in many intercultural learning environments, ensuring balanced contributions from all participants, especially those representing minority nationalities or less dominant academic backgrounds, demanded intentional facilitation. Without careful moderation, discussions risked being dominated by

individuals with stronger language proficiency or more assertive communication styles. This aligns with Garcia et al. (2022), who emphasize the importance of applying Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) principles in ensuring equitable engagement in multidisciplinary training programs.

Logistical limitations further constrained the implementation. While the Agricultural Extension, Human Resources, and Development Centre provided a suitable setting, the program's condensed schedule restricted the depth of hands-on practice, particularly in simulating complete Marosok transactions from initiation to agreement. As Rahim et al. (2024) suggest, culturally embedded negotiation practices require iterative engagement to be fully internalized, a process that is often challenging to achieve within short-term interventions.

Integrating Marosok values into universally applicable business ethics frameworks posed conceptual challenges. While participants acknowledged the tradition's cultural significance, translating its principles into formats compatible with digital transactions, international trade ethics, and transparent value chain systems required critical reflection and adaptation. These conceptual negotiations underscore the importance of sustained engagement and further research to effectively align local wisdom traditions with the evolving demands of modern business environments.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the community service program demonstrated that the Marosok tradition can serve as an effective pedagogical tool for fostering cross-cultural understanding, enhancing ethical business awareness, and introducing trust-based marketing models in a diverse academic setting. The combination of orientation sessions, thematic lectures, role-play simulations, and participatory discussions proved successful in increasing both cognitive

and affective learning outcomes, as evidenced by a 34.9% improvement in knowledge and 86% of participants expressing high or very high interest. The multicultural composition of the cohort significantly enriched the dialogue and promoted intercultural competence, aligning with the broader goal of integrating local wisdom into modern educational contexts. Challenges remained, including differences in participants' prior knowledge, limited familiarity with traditional negotiation systems, and the program's short duration, which restricted deeper experiential engagement. To address these limitations, future initiatives should extend the program timeframe, integrate digital platforms for pre- and post-program learning, and provide opportunities for participants to apply Marosok-inspired negotiation principles in real or simulated market environments. Such strategies will not only preserve cultural heritage but also adapt its principles to make them relevant in contemporary business practices, thereby strengthening the educational and societal impact of similar programs.

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