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Analysis of Character Values in the *Rambu Solo'* Traditional Ceremony for Early Childhood

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ABSTRACT	ARTICLE INFO
The aim of educational characters is to build a strong nation where people become more tolerant, solidarity, and noble morals. Therefore, character education in early childhood is considered important because at an early age children's character is easy to shape because children imitate and absorb behavior from the surrounding environment more quickly. The effort in passing on culture to early childhood in Tana Toraja Regency involves early childhood in cultural activities. One of the activities involving early childhood is the <i>Rambu Solo'</i> traditional ceremony. The purpose of this study was to determine the character education values reflected in the <i>Rambu Solo'</i> traditional ceremony for early childhood. This study is qualitative with semi ethnographic approach. The data collection techniques are observation, interview, and documentation. The results of this study are the value of character education that exists in the <i>Rambu Solo'</i> ceremony for early childhood is religious, social care, tolerance, discipline, and curiosity. Furthermore, one of the form of early childhood involvement in the <i>Rambu Solo'</i> ceremony is receiving guests that adjusted to the physical abilities of the children.	Article History: Submitted/Received 10 Oct 2024 First Revised 08 Nov 2024 Accepted 16 Nov 2024 First Available online 03 Jan 2025 Keyword: Early childhood, <i>Rambu Solo'</i>, Character values.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental thing that supports achieving life goals and progress in life. Education has a significant impact on the community's ability to survive which is fundamental to achieving a life goal and progress in life because the community is one of the parameters determining the fate or sustainability of education (Amaliyah, 2021). Education is also important for the progress of education in the present and future (Santamaría-Cárdaba et al., 2021). Good human resources are formed by education in creating intelligence so that human life continues to improve.

Koentjaraningrat wrote that education is an effort to transfer customs and all cultures from the old generation to the new generation (Hastuti and Ahmad, 2021). Furthermore, the philosophical basis of the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 146 of 2014 is that early childhood is the heir to the nation's creative culture. Muzakki and Fauziah (2015) also argue that children's lives cannot be separated from their cultural identity and environment and the values of local wisdom related to the environment must be maintained because it is an ideal idea that has been processed and passed down to children and grandchildren as stated by Gasong that local wisdom has existed since long ago and has made our nation a strong nation (Gasong, 2015). Therefore, early childhood education is not only an effort to help children grow and develop but also an effort to pass on culture as national pride (Dini, 2021). So that learning for early childhood can utilize various environmental potentials such as local wisdom values.

As many people understand, education and culture are closely related because both are sustainable, and both support each other (Budiman, 2017; Dirgari et al., 2022). The roots of a culture can be uprooted and lost if education is not based on cultural principles and rules. In this context, we can see the link between education cultural traditions with the personality of a society, no matter how simple that society is. The effort in passing on culture to early childhood in Tana Toraja Regency is to involve early childhood in cultural activities. One of the activities involving early childhood is *the Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony, therefore researchers are interested in examining the character values that exist in the ceremony.

The Rambu Solo' ceremony is a death ceremony and is carried out based on a person's social strata (Pabebang et al., 2022). This traditional ceremony is one of the cultural heritages that is unique so many visitors, especially from foreign tourists, come to visit to witness the series of events. This traditional ceremony has its own charm that is not owned by other tribes. This traditional ceremony is inherited from the teachings of *Aluk Todolo* and is a ceremony of pride due to its interesting practices and its own distinctiveness (Patiung and Suleman, 2020). *Aluk Todolo* is an old animist belief which in its development was influenced by the teachings of Confucius and Hinduism, therefore the government of the Republic of Indonesia classifies *Aluk Todolo* as a sect of Hindu Dharma (Aragon, 2021). In this ceremony, worship is made to the soul of the deceased because it is believed that everything sacrificed (living and non-living) will be taken by the spirit of the deceased to *Puya* (the spirit world of the deceased) to become his wealth there (Hasni et al., 2021).

The Rambu Solo' ceremony teaches many things, especially about the philosophy of life to its people. This traditional ceremony is also a place to learn about local wisdom and respect for nature. The community is taught about the importance of protecting nature and harmonious relationships with the surrounding environment. This is reflected in traditional ceremonies that are full of symbols of respect for parents and ancestors (Ohaja and Anyim, 2021; Sabaruddin et al., 2020; Clark and Coe, 2021).

The involvement of early childhood in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, especially in the stage of receiving guests by wearing typical Toraja traditional clothes, has the support of parents, families, and the surrounding environment because the cultivation of cultural values cannot be separated from the role of the closest family (Fransiska and Suparno, 2019). As we know the development and growth of children is significantly influenced by the relationship between parents and children, as well as their immediate environment (Mulia and Kurniati, 2023). The role of parents to their children is the basis for changes in generations that are adjusted to the development of society (Hutagalung and Ramadan, 2022). As such, most parents maintain a consistent rationale and approach influenced by ethnic, racial, and cultural beliefs and values. It is also influenced by the circumstances in which the parents live and develop (Abaied and Perry, 2021). The involvement of children in the stages of this series of ceremonial processions is interesting because each stage of the ceremonial procession takes quite a long time while early childhood has a unique character that is different from adults in understanding this.

Some previous and relevant research results regarding the *Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony and character education are (a) Socio-cultural studies of *Rambu Solo'* in the Formation of Student Character researched by Guntara. This research reveals that the *Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony can be used as a source of character education learning (Guntara, 2016); (b) Character Education Based on Local Culture: Analysis of Multiculturalism Values in *Rambu Solo'* Tradition in Toraja researched by Dannari. This research reveals the multiculturalism values contained in the *Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony, namely religious tolerance, mutual cooperation, mutual respect, and appreciation (Dannari, 2021); (c) Character Education Sourced from Local Wisdom, Especially the *Rambu Solo'* Ceremony of the Toraja Community Based on the Practice of the Synthesis Model researched by Pantan *et al.* This research reveals that local wisdom such as the *Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony can be used as a source of character education learning for the next generation because it contains character values. The values contained in this funeral event are *kasianggaran* (mutual respect), mutual help, mutual assistance, *katongkonan* (presence and others) (Pantan *et al.*, 2024).

Based on previous research, the difference with this research is in focus, sample, and location. In line with this, researchers have not found research on the analysis of character values in the *Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony for early childhood in Tana Toraja. Therefore, researchers are interested and will explore the value of early childhood character in the *Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony. Researchers hope that through a deep understanding of ancestral culture and traditions, early childhood will grow into a generation that has a strong character and is rooted in noble values.

2. METHODS

This study aims to describe and analyze the character development contained in the *Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony for early childhood. The research method used in this research is semi ethnographic which is one of the methods of the qualitative approach. Data was conducted for 4 months in Tana Toraja Regency. Tana Toraja is one of the regency of South Sulawesi Province. This location was chosen because it is the place where the *Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony took place so it is hoped that this research can obtain valid, accurate, and reliable data that is truly relevant to corroborate events and events that actually occur or are experienced directly by the object in this study.

Data collection is a systematic and standardized process for obtaining or obtaining the necessary data and information where there is a relationship between the data collection method and the research problem to be solved. The data analysis technique used is grounded theory. Charmaz and Thornberg stated that this technique aims to analyze data obtained in the field without referring to certain theories (Charmaz and Thornberg, 2021). Grounded theory analysis is carried out directly by researchers based on data from informants (Phuthong, 2023). Once collected, the researcher transcribes the interviews and observation notes and then analyzes them.

Data collection through interviews with participants, totalling 5 people consisting 2 traditional leaders who are experts in regional culture and customs who understand and know exactly about the traditional ceremony starting from the initial series of implementation to the end of the traditional ceremony and 3 people who are parents or relatives of early childhood involved in the *Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Character Education Values

Based on the results of the research, the author found several character education values reflected in the *Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony. The following are the values contained in the *Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony for early childhood:

3.1.1 Religious

The *Rambu Solo'* ceremony is not just a traditional ritual, but it is also full of deep religious meaning for the Torajan people. Although major religions such as Christianity and Islam have entered the Toraja community, the animism and dynamism beliefs contained in *Aluk Todolo* remain strong, especially in the implementation of *Rambu Solo'*. In every stage of the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, it always begins with worship. Religious values are shown in every *Rambu Solo'* traditional procession where it begins with worship with the entire family can and the community at that location. Figure 1 shows the atmosphere of joint prayer/worship to start each activity stage in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony.



Figure 1. Worship activities begin every activity in *Rambu Solo'*.

This is a very good tradition and a tradition that has been passed down by the ancestors. In addition to providing spiritual benefits, worship can also provide inner calm and strength to face challenges. Involving early childhood in worship activities provides excellent benefits for their growth and development, both spiritually, socially, and emotionally.

3.1.2 Social Care

At the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, the value of social care is one of the values that are very important and very visible, for example, when someone dies, without being commanded, all relatives, and neighbors will come to mourn and help do what can be done, for example putting up tents, making huts for party events, taking care of consumption for those who come to mourn. Some come with sugar, coffee, tea, pork, or others to help the family in entertaining guests who come to mourn. This value is secured for early childhood so that it will be carried over in the future. One form of social care is seen in Figure 2. in the *Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony where the community assists others in need.



Figure 2. Social Care of the Community Assisting others

3.1.3 Tolerance

In this *Rambu Solo'* ceremony, tolerance is highly upheld, for example, there are family groups who are present at that time and are Muslim, so they are given special dishes without mixing with dishes that are served in general. At certain moments, for example, when slaughtering buffaloes, Muslims are allowed to slaughter buffaloes by Muslim methods. In the *Rambu Solo'* event, Muslim relatives are still present to provide what assistance they can. The presence of early childhood in this activity makes them understand tolerance, how to place themselves, and how to treat those who have different beliefs from us. The following picture shows the participation of local people of different beliefs in the *Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony as a form of tolerance between religions and beliefs.



Figure 3. Social care of the community assisting others.

3.1.4 Discipline

One of the values instilled is the value of discipline as stated by Mr. SS as a traditional leader. Mr. SS said that the value of discipline is embedded because at the *Rambu Solo'* event early in the morning we have to be ready to do everything related to the day's activities. For the Toraja tribe, guests are highly respected so at the *Rambu Solo'* event a special place is prepared, with good decorations to receive guests who come. At the reception area, guests are given the best dishes according to the family's ability, when they enter the ceremony location, they are welcomed with traditional dances and greetings by the protocol (for certain parties). This is where children are taught how we should respect others, give polite greetings, and provide proper seating for guests.

3.1.5 Curiosity

The Rambu Solo' activity is a very important moment for the Toraja tribe, at this moment all families come from various directions to share sorrow, and strengthen each other. At this moment there is a relationship that continues to be strengthened, where they may be far apart daily, but at the moment of *Rambu Solo'* they can meet one another and get to know new family members (children, sons-in-law, in-laws) and family groups (cousins, uncles, aunts, nephews) who have never met because they are in different places. At the moment of *Rambu Solo'*, early childhood is taught to recognize family clans and to keep in touch with all family clans.

According to Mr. DH as a parent he stated that, "the value that needs to be instilled in early childhood is the value of kinship at this age children have a high curiosity so we must instill that customs cannot be separated even though we are religious, whatever our religion is but customs are still followed. So we enter the customary area, the customs there we follow are not our customs".

This is by the characteristics of early childhood, where they believe that the world is full of amazing and interesting things, by curiosity needs to be developed so that children can gain new knowledge in developing their cognitive abilities (Suardi et al., 2021).

3.2 Early Childhood Involvement

At the *Rambu Solo'* traditional ceremony, early childhood is also present. Children are included so that they can get to know Toraja customs, besides that many values want to be secured for them from an early age. Their involvement will give color to the series of activities. Their presence is also a sign that this is an all-family activity, as shown in Figure 1. Early childhood involvement in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony is certainly tailored to their physical abilities. As stated by SS, one form of children's involvement is in receiving guests. In this activity, they wear traditional Toraja clothes and they stand in front of the reception area directing guests to enter the place where they will sit. This is done with the consideration that the children can already do these activities.

The presence of young children at the *Rambu Solo'* event is a special pleasure for them because at that moment they can play with their peers, and see buffaloes, pigs, deer, and horses, which they may never have seen before directly.

So basically the involvement of early childhood in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony provides many benefits specifically in fostering and instilling good character values. However, under certain conditions when *Rambu Solo'* activities are not carried out during school holidays, their presence at school will be disrupted.

The traditional *Rambu Solo'* ceremony has several stages of activity. Each series of activities begins with worship led by religious leaders. The cultivation of religious character values in *Rambu Solo'* shows that the Toraja tribe has a very high level of religion. Like the ethnic groups in Indonesia who have strong divine values and are still held firmly to this day (Sihombing, 2022).

The religious values underlying the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony reflect human relationships with the universe and ancestors. As expressed by Kahissay *et al.*, some local traditional beliefs and ceremonies represent recognition of the existence of God who is the source of the greatest power outside of human power (Kahissay *et al.*, 2020).

Awareness of the importance of cultivating a sense of caring for early childhood must be nurtured and familiarized from an early age because humans are social creatures who cannot live alone and need the help of others to survive. The culture of gotong royong is a cultural heritage of Indonesian society that needs to be preserved because it is an implementation of a sense of social care and serves to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood between components of society, nation, and state.

The value of tolerance towards early childhood also needs to be introduced and familiarized because the condition of Indonesian society consists of various ethnic groups, languages, religions, and cultures that are different and geographically consists of islands that are separated from each other so that it requires mutual understanding and tolerance among fellow children of the nation. The values of tolerance need to be maintained because the Indonesian nation is built on diversity which is very vulnerable to ethnic, religious, and racial problems (Sara), so that the spirit of Bhinneka Tunggal Ika can still be maintained. As stated by Hoon in Verkuyten and Killen tolerance is needed in responding to diversity. Tolerance is a positive behavior that will help children adjust to new environments (Verkuyten and Killen, 2021).

Planting the value of discipline in early childhood is very necessary so that later the child is accustomed to facing the challenges of life in the future. It is expected that early childhood will be able to carry out tasks in life, especially in managing the sustainability of the nation and state.

The value of curiosity is one of the character values that a person needs in facing the challenges of life so this value needs to be familiarized in early childhood. Curiosity is an instinct of human origin that needs to be developed in early childhood because humans who have curiosity will continue to learn throughout their lives, especially to overcome all the challenges faced so that humans can continue to survive and continue their lives.

The involvement of early childhood in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony is intended to provide character education directly so that they can feel for themselves and experience the processes carried out so that the character values in the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony can be imprinted and firmly embedded in their memories until adulthood.

4. CONCLUSION

From the results of research on the analysis of character education values at the *Rambu Solo'* ceremony for early childhood, it can be concluded that in *Rambu Solo'* activities there are character values instilled in children including social care, discipline, curiosity, love for the country, love of peace, tolerance, and care for the environment. Their involvement is adjusted to their physical abilities because this series of activities requires strong energy and physical strength. Early childhood involvement in *Rambu Solo'* activities is useful for building emotional and kinship relationships between families because the ceremony is a moment

where family clumps can get to know each other. In this case, especially for young children, they learn to recognize their family clan so that the kinship of the Torajan people is built from an early age. It also helps them learn about family identity, values, traditions, and culture and forms the basis of an understanding of who they are and how they will behave in society.

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