

## Character Education Values in Traditional Dance Extracurricular Activities in Elementary Schools

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### Abstract

*This research aims to describe the values applied in extracurricular dance activities at SDN 4 Kesu'. The research method used is descriptive qualitative research. The subjects of this research are teachers who conduct traditional dance extracurricular activities at elementary schools. Data collection techniques use observation, interviews, and documentation. The collected data were analysed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing stages. The results show that traditional dance extracurricular activities not only train students in dance movements but also apply the values found in traditional dance and then interpret them into character education values. The character education values found in traditional dance extracurricular activities are religious values, tolerance, discipline, hard work, independence, curiosity, environmental care, social care, and responsibility. Teachers play a pivotal role in instilling character values by continuously guiding and directing students. This approach is key to imparting and transmitting positive values to students. In the context of dance extracurricular activities, this can be achieved through several practices: ensuring students arrive at school on time before practice begins, and starting and ending every session with a prayer.*

**Keywords:** Character Education, Extracurricular, Traditional Dance

### INTRODUCTION

Education is the transmission of knowledge, skills, and attitudes from one generation to the next through learning, training, or other forms of teaching (Mikre, 2011). Education shapes students holistically not only in terms of knowledge and skills but also in terms of good attitudes or character (Cottrell, 2021).

Just as individual character means, collective character also signifies the distinctive and intrinsic qualities in a communication, group of society, or a particular nation (Mustakim, 2011). If linked to human civilization, character is formed since the historical process as the main trait for the fundamental foundation of a society's culture. Therefore, there is a need for education as an institution that functions to teach the main traits that are characteristic in a society to the characteristics of the learners, aiming for the learners to grow into dignified human beings so that they can thrive within the culture of society (Irwandi et al., 2022).

Schools play a pivotal role in the cultivation of character values, a responsibility underscored by the Indonesian government's adoption of the Curriculum of 2013, aimed at imbuing elementary school students with virtuous principles through the establishment of character education initiatives (Puspitasari et al., 2021). Character education encompasses a spectrum of eighteen values, which educators are tasked with nurturing through pedagogical interventions (Pike et al., 2021). The overarching goal is for students to internalize attitudes and character traits reflective of the ethos of the Indonesian nation. As articulated by Komalasari and Saripudin, character education endeavors to cultivate individuals' capacity to discern ethical nuances, uphold moral rectitude, and instantiate altruistic behaviors in societal context (Komalasari & Saripudin, 2017).

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The pivotal role of character education in shaping students' dispositions and ethical frameworks mandates a comprehensive integration of character values not only within formal classroom settings but also across extracurricular activities, thereby seamlessly embedding moral development into students' daily routines. Within the educational milieu, three distinct activity domains are delineated: intracurricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular engagements.

Extracurricular activities, positioned outside the formal pedagogical framework, emerge as conduits for character value cultivation. Per the regulations stipulated in the Minister of Education and Culture No. 39 of 2018, extracurricular undertakings serve as instrumental platforms for holistic student development. These activities, conducted beyond conventional instructional hours, are designed to augment students' cognitive and affective domains, facilitating the internalization of moral precepts and societal norms (Damanik, 2014; Wiyani, 2013). Extracurricular pursuits, spanning domains such as athletics and the arts, are strategically crafted to hone students' aptitudes and foster their talents.

One of the extracurricular activities implemented in elementary schools is traditional dance art. Extracurricular dance art is a component of the arts discipline now incorporated into elementary education units (Wulan et al., 2019). Traditional dance art instruction in extracurricular activities at one elementary school occurs outside regular instructional hours. Extracurricular dance art activities are attended by students with a specific interest and talent in dance, particularly traditional dance .

SDN 4 Kesu' is one of the elementary schools in Tana Toraja that incorporates Toraja traditional dance art as a form of extracurricular activity available to students. Based on interviews with the teacher in charge of the dance extracurricular activity, the traditional dance taught is the Pa'gellu traditional dance, which is attended by five female students and three male students. The Pa'gellu dance is one of the traditional dances of the Toraja ethnic group performed during Toraja customary events, especially during the celebration known as Rambu Tuka'. The Toraja dance performed at SDN 4 Kesu' is the "Gellu' Tua" dance. Gellu' Tua is a joyful dance traditionally performed during Toraja cultural ceremonies. Recently, this dance has begun to fade from the Toraja community as it is being overshadowed by the rapidly developing modern creative dance forms . This situation underscores the importance of encouraging the community, especially children, to revive and preserve the Gellu' Tua dance, ensuring that this cultural heritage of the Toraja people remains vibrant (Lebonna et al., 2022).

The *Pa'gellu'* dance comprises twelve movements, each carrying its own symbolism: *Gellu Siman Dipobunga'*/*Pa' Dena-dena* is resembling a sparrow's flight, signifies unity and cooperation, *Ma' tabe'*/*Mekatabe'* is the gesture of performed at the dance's outset, expresses respect and a plea for divine guidance and strength, *Pa' Gellu' Tua* with extended arms and a swaying body, this movement pays homage to ancestors and their contributions. *Pa' Kaa-kaa bale* is similar to fish swimming against the current, this gesture represents courage in facing challenges with dignity, *Pa' Langkan-langkan*, emulating the majestic flight of an eagle, this motion embodies leadership qualities like bravery and resilience, *Pa' Tulekken*, pressing hands to the waist while rotating symbolizes the need for evaluation and improvement in life's tasks, *Pa' Unmorong* is resembling a child playing in clean water, this movement underscores the importance of cleanliness and clear thinking, *Massiri* is similar to winnowing rice, this action symbolizes the process of selection and the importance of making wise decisions, *Penggirik tang tarri'* is a spinning motion followed by a pause indicates the need for periodic assessment and adjustment in work. *Pang ra'pak pentallun* is breaking tasks into stages underscores the importance of gradual progress and patience. *Pang rampanan* is depicting relaxation and rejuvenation, this movement emphasizes the necessity of taking breaks during work. *Pa' Passakke*, this final gesture expresses gratitude to the audience and the Creator for blessings and experiences.

Observations at SDN 4 Kesu' reveal that the dance extracurricular activity is not merely a training session but also serves as a form of learning. Students are not only taught dance techniques but also given instruction regarding the significance of the dance being taught, namely the *Pa'gellu'* dance. The *Pa'gellu'* dance, a traditional Toraja dance, embodies the values embraced by the Toraja ethnic group in its patterns and movements. Therefore, according to the teacher at SDN 4 Kesu', extracurricular activities serve as a platform for developing students' character values.

Based on the aforementioned background, the researcher aims to identify the character education values embedded in the extracurricular traditional dance activities at SDN 4 Kesu'. This endeavor is pursued with the hope of providing valuable insights, particularly for similar research endeavors and educators seeking to cultivate character values through extracurricular activities in elementary schools.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literature review on character education values in traditional dance extracurricular activities in elementary schools would likely encompass a range of scholarly articles, research papers, and other relevant sources that examine the intersection of character development and cultural activities within the educational context. Literature review on character education values in traditional dance extracurricular activities in elementary schools would likely encompass a range of scholarly articles, research papers, and other relevant sources that examine the intersection of character development and cultural activities within the educational context. Here's a structured outline of what such a literature review might cover:

### **1. Introduction to Character Education and Traditional Dance Extracurricular Activities**

(Luis et al., 2023) In the realm of elementary education, character development stands as a cornerstone for nurturing well-rounded individuals capable of navigating life's complexities with integrity and empathy. Character education, a deliberate endeavor within educational frameworks, focuses on instilling essential virtues and moral values in students. Concurrently, extracurricular activities offer fertile ground for character cultivation beyond the confines of traditional classroom settings. Among these activities, traditional dance emerges as a cultural tapestry interwoven with rich lessons in discipline, teamwork, cultural appreciation, and self-expression. (Hermanto et al., 2024) This synthesis of character education values with the vibrant rhythms of traditional dance presents an intriguing avenue for holistic student development, warranting exploration within the educational discourse.

### **Character Education in Elementary School**

Character education in elementary schools serves as a foundational component of holistic student development. (Soner et al., 2016) At this crucial stage of cognitive and socio-emotional growth, children are receptive to the values and behaviors modeled by adults and peers. Schools play a pivotal role in shaping these impressions, offering structured programs and initiatives designed to cultivate virtues such as respect, responsibility, fairness, honesty, empathy, and perseverance.

Within the elementary curriculum, character education finds integration across various subjects and activities. Lessons on citizenship, moral dilemmas in literature, cooperative learning exercises, and classroom discussions provide avenues for exploring ethical principles and decision-making frameworks. Moreover, educators employ strategies like role-playing, storytelling, and reflective journals to deepen students' understanding of character traits and their practical application in daily life.

(Ghiso & Burdick-Shepherd, 2020) Character education initiatives extend beyond the classroom, encompassing school-wide policies, assemblies, and community service projects. By fostering a positive school climate rooted in mutual respect and inclusivity, elementary schools create conducive environments for character development. These efforts not only nurture individual virtues but also promote social cohesion and responsible citizenship among students.

Research indicates that effective character education programs in elementary schools yield numerous benefits. Students exhibit improved academic performance, enhanced social skills, reduced disciplinary issues, and increased empathy towards others. Moreover, character-educated individuals are better equipped to navigate ethical dilemmas, build meaningful relationships, and contribute positively to their communities.

### **3. Traditional Dance as a Vehicle for Character Education**

Traditional dance, deeply entrenched in cultural heritage and expression, emerges as a potent conduit for character education within educational realms. Across a spectrum of cultural forms, traditional dance presents a dynamic arena wherein students engage in experiential learning, facilitating the cultivation of vital

character traits and values. (Arifin et al., 2020) Central to this pedagogy is the cultivation of discipline and focus; participants in traditional dance must adhere to rigorous routines, master intricate movements, and synchronize with fellow dancers, fostering qualities of dedication, perseverance, and self-control. Moreover, the collaborative nature of traditional dance engenders a culture of teamwork and cooperation, wherein students learn to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts amicably, and value the contributions of each team member. As students immerse themselves in the rich tapestry of cultural narratives embedded within traditional dance, they develop a profound appreciation for cultural diversity and heritage, nurturing empathy, tolerance, and a broader worldview.

### **Benefits and Challenges**

(Kolzow et al., 2021) Integrating traditional dance into character education initiatives offers a plethora of benefits for elementary school students. Firstly, it provides a rich cultural experience, allowing students to immerse themselves in diverse traditions and narratives, fostering a deeper appreciation for cultural heritage. Moreover, traditional dance serves as a vehicle for character development, instilling virtues like discipline, teamwork, perseverance, and cultural sensitivity. The collaborative nature of dance encourages social interaction, enhancing students' communication skills and ability to work effectively in groups. Additionally, the physical activity inherent in dance promotes health and wellness, contributing to students' overall fitness and motor skills development. Furthermore, dance serves as a creative outlet for emotional expression, allowing students to explore and communicate their feelings through movement. However, integrating traditional dance into character education may pose certain challenges, including access to qualified instructors, resources for costumes and equipment, and ensuring cultural authenticity and sensitivity in dance selections and instruction. Despite these challenges, the potential benefits of incorporating traditional dance into character education initiatives underscore its value as a holistic approach to student development.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research method employed in this study is qualitative research with a descriptive approach (Cresswell, 2007). Descriptive research is utilized to understand how character education values manifest in extracurricular dance art activities at SDN 4 Kesu'. The research is conducted at SDN 4 Kesu' in North Toraja Regency. The subjects of the study are the teachers who conduct the extracurricular activities and the students participating in these activities. This location is chosen to gather data regarding the character education values instilled in the extracurricular dance art activities at SDN 4 Kesu', aligning with the focal points of the research problem.

Data collection is carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation techniques (Sugiyono, 2019). In this research, two types of data sources are utilized: primary and secondary data sources. Subsequently, data analysis is conducted through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The data collected from the field is substantial and requires detailed documentation and analysis. To manage this, it is essential to conduct data analysis through data reduction. After data reduction, the next step is to display the data through data presentation. This involves organizing and structuring the data into patterns and relationships, making it easier to understand. The conclusion drawing or verification stage is a subsequent phase where the researcher draws conclusions from the findings. This stage involves synthesizing the analyzed data to derive meaningful insights and validate the results.

### **RESULTS**

The cultivation of character values in current extracurricular dance art activities at SDN 4 Kesu' is intricately linked to the school's vision and mission, which emphasize the realization of character education values integrated into subjects, extracurricular activities, and character education initiatives. The character values instilled in students participating in extracurricular activities are aligned with the principles of character education, making it easier to achieve the desired goals and objectives.

In instilling character values in students, teachers provide tangible examples rather than mere verbal explanations, guiding students to incorporate these values into their ethical conduct and foster positive attitudes, thus equipping them for the future. Therefore, the cultivation of character values in students should commence early on so that from a young age, students can internalize these values. The research findings indicate that

there are nine-character values implemented by teachers in the extracurricular dance art activities at SDN 4 Kesu', namely religiousness, discipline, honesty, tolerance, hard work, independence, social concern, environmental awareness, and responsibility.

Based on interviews with dance teachers at SDN 4 Kesu', in the process of instilling the character value of independence in students, teachers always direct students to be independent both in participating in extracurricular dance art activities, at school, and at home. Teachers always encourage students to be independent during practice at school if the teacher is absent or late due to other commitments, instructing students to practice independently. With the process of instilling the character value of independence in students, they no longer need to reprimand each other during practice sessions; instead, they work together to practice independently (Handayani et al., 2021).

In the process of instilling the character value of social concern in students, teachers also guide and mentor students to demonstrate care or empathy towards others, manifested in the form of providing assistance according to their ability. This is in line with Tabi'in assertion that social concern entails an attitude and action that is always willing to help those in need (Tabi'in, 2017).

Another character value cultivated by teachers in extracurricular dance art activities at SDN 4 Kesu' is the value of responsibility. Based on direct observations, it is evident that to instill the value of responsibility, teachers provide direct examples of responsible behavior that students should emulate, such as arriving punctually for practice, with the hope that students will follow suit. This aligns with Pujiawati's statement that responsibility is the obligation towards oneself, requiring individuals to fulfill their duties in developing their personal character as individuals (Pujiawati, 2012).



**Figure 1.** *Ma'tabe'* Movement Pattern (Reverence)

The interview findings with the teacher indicate that this movement pattern can also carry significance, emphasizing the reliance on and prioritization of the Creator in all endeavors. Furthermore, in fostering religious values, the teacher mentioned that students are always encouraged to pray before and after engaging in extracurricular activities (Zuhroh, 2019). This was expressed by the dance teacher as follows:

*" Before and after starting our extracurricular dance activities, we always encourage students to pray. This is part of our efforts to foster religious values among the students. The Ma'tabe' movement pattern in the Pa'gellu' dance is not only an artistic expression but also a means to convey religious messages. Through this movement, we aim to teach students that in everything they do, they should rely on and prioritize the Creator, acknowledging Him as the source of all goodness and success."*

Based on observations and documentary studies, the movements in the *Pa'gellu'* dance also carry meanings of social concern and environmental awareness. Many dance movements are inspired by nature and social values of the Toraja community, such as the *Pa' Kaa-kaa bale*, *Pa' Langkan-langkan*, and *Pa' Dena'-dena'* movements, which are inspired by swimming fish, the wings of birds such as Eang and Pipit (Pala'langan, 2014). These dance movements can be seen in the picture below:



Figure 2. Pa' Kaa-kaa Bale Movements

The pa'langkan-langkan movement represents an eagle, signifying that a leader should be powerful, brave, and resolute, akin to an eagle that boldly confronts storms and difficult circumstances.



Figure 3. Pa' Dena'-dena' Movements

The Pa'dena-dena movement, for example, mimics the actions of sparrows flying in circles with swinging arms and hopping collectively as they enter the dance space. This movement represents the concept of living in unity.

## DISCUSSION

Based on observations during the Pa'gellu' dance taught by the teacher, there is a pattern of movement called the Ma'tabe' movement. This movement is performed at the beginning of the dance and signifies reverence to God and the audience. The following is the Ma'tabe movement pattern, or the reverence movement, in the Pa'gellu' dance taught

This is in line with the views expressed by Ritonga, who stated that by encouraging students to pray before and after starting learning activities, religious values among students can be developed (Ritonga et al., 2023).

Another character value developed by teachers in extracurricular dance art activities is discipline. According to interviews with teachers, the regular schedule of activities performed by students can train their discipline. This is because mastering the movement patterns in the Pa'gellu' dance requires regular and disciplined practice. Consistent with these findings, research conducted by Resi asserts that students' discipline can be enhanced through regular practice in dance art activities (Resi et al., 2019).

From the research findings at SDN 4 Kesu' in extracurricular dance art activities, in instilling the character value of honesty in students, teachers guide, mentor, and allow students to ask questions if they find certain movements difficult to perform. Teachers also teach their students to be honest if they forget certain movements so that the teachers can guide them back to the movements they have forgotten. With the cultivation of the value of honesty, students can speak truthfully if they encounter difficulties in performing each movement that they cannot execute and participate together with their peers without mocking those who are still struggling to learn each movement (Rosala & Budiman, 2020). This aligns with the views of Haryanto, who states that honesty is interpreted as an effort to uphold truth, sincerity, avoidance of lying, and refraining from leading others astray (Haryanto, 2013).

Based on the research findings at SDN 4 Kesu' in extracurricular dance art activities, in instilling the character value of tolerance, teachers guide and mentor students to apply tolerant attitudes by providing simple examples, such as respecting differences among peers, assisting each other, helping one another, and sharing with each other, like sharing food or snacks with classmates who may not have brought any. Teachers also frequently emphasize to students that attitudes of sharing and mutual assistance are crucial in daily life. With the cultivation of the character value of tolerance, students will increasingly exhibit behaviors of sharing with their peers both at school and during practice sessions (Suri & Chandra, 2021). Tolerance fosters attitudes of accepting differences, transforming uniformity into diversity, recognizing the rights of others, appreciating and respecting the existence of others, supporting and respecting cultural differences, and other diversities created by the Almighty (Widodo et al., 2020). Additionally, the Toraja ethnic group is known for their Longko' culture, where they always respect their elders (Hakpantria et al., 2022).

In learning each movement, teachers also provide guidance to students who may feel tired during practice due to the difficulty of learning each dance movement. Teachers always reassure students that every effort yields results and urge them to exert more effort to learn each movement taught by their teacher. With guidance and encouragement from their teacher, students participating in extracurricular dance art activities strive their utmost and earnestly endeavor to learn the dance movements taught. This aligns with assertion that hard work demonstrates sincere efforts in overcoming various learning obstacles, tasks, and completing tasks to the best of one's ability (Roberson, 2020).

## **CONCLUSION**

There are 9 character education values developed or applied by teachers at SDN 4 Kesu' in the extracurricular activity of traditional dance, specifically Pa'gellu'. These character values include religiosity, discipline, honesty, tolerance, hard work, independence, social concern, environmental awareness, and responsibility. In instilling these character education values in students at SDN 4 Kesu', teachers consistently guide and mentor students, which is key to imparting positive values to them. Additionally, teachers explain the meanings behind the movements of the Pa'gellu' dance, commence and conclude each session with prayers, and emphasize punctuality at school. The cultivation of character values is carried out through direct guidance and instruction to shape each character trait that should be instilled in students participating in the extracurricular traditional dance activity at SDN 4 Kesu'.

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