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REVEALING THE CHARACTER VALUE IN "KUKISI KARAWO"
CULINARY, A TRADITIONAL COOKIES FROM GORONTALO

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Presented in
"International Seminar on Culinary Practices in Wallacean Line;
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Balai Pelestarian Nilai Budaya Sulawesi Utara
Manado, 28-31 October 2018

ABSTRACT

Gorontalo has many traditions such as unique culinary of cookies called *kukisi karawo*. *Kukisi karawo* is highly identic with *karawo* embroidery from its colors and crafting which similar to those of *karawo* embroidery. This present study on *kukisi karawo* reveals that there are various character values as role models for people of Gorontalo. These values consist of: honesty, tolerance, discipline, hardworking and perseverance, creative, democratic, curiosity, communicative, peace, and environmentally friendly, and socially responsive and responsible. In addition, there are also attitudes or behavior of the Gorontalo people who reflected in *Kukisi Karawo*, such as, friendly, caring, respecting others, tolerance, shy, polite, and civilized.

Keywords: character values, culinary, *kukisi karawo*

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Keywords: *character values, culinary, kukisi karawo*

1. Introduction

Gorontalo is one of the regions which considered as regions that highly valued culture among its society. Gorontalo was decreed as a separate province from its original province (Sulawesi Utara) in 2001. Therefore, it is relatively young compared to other provinces. However, cultural values as the character of Gorontalo community have been passed down for generations. Gorontalo was established almost 400 years ago and was one of the oldest cities in Sulawesi along with Makassar, Pare-Pare, and Manado.

Gorontalo is known as one of the centers of Islamic development especially for the Eastern part of Indonesia, which stretched along Ternate, Gorontalo, and Bone. Due to its strategic location, Gorontalo becomes center of education, trade for its surrounding area such as Bolaang Mongondow, Buol Toli-Toli, Luwuk Banggai, Donggala (Sulawesi Tengah) up to Sulawesi Tenggara.

The lives of the people of Gorontalo during the colonization era was a monarch system called *Pohala'a*. These *Pohala'a* were divided into five *Pohala'a* namely, *Pohala'a* Gorontalo, *Pohala'a* Limboto, *Pohala'a* Suwawa, *Pohala'a* Boalemo, and *Pohala'a* Atinggola. Each of these *pohala'a*, in addition to having a state system, they are also governed by the cultural values and customary law of the local Gorontalo people. Due to this customary law, Gorontalo is classified into one of 19 custom areas in Indonesia. The cultural system reflected in each customary ceremony today in Gorontalo is one of the media to strengthen the Islamic mission in Gorontalo. Therefore, the founding fathers of this region formulated the philosophy of “*Adat bersendikan Syara/custom based on sharia', Syara' bersendikan Kitabullah/sharia based on the holy book*”.

This philosophy signifies that the Gorontalo community is identic with Islam, as the culture of the Gorontalo people is closely related to Islamic values as its reference. It is similar to what Basri Amin (2010: 22) has written that the cultural character in Gorontalo has been founded around the 16 and 17th centuries AC. Therefore, the culture can be seen as the continuation of the ancient time culture, hence, the reflection of the past shaped and molded the current culture, and thus, it can differentiate the Gorontalo culture with other culture.

A region's identity determines its character and becomes its unique brand of that region. The character is one of the issues that stakeholders often talked about, especially educators. Educators play an important role in developing a nation's character. The good cultural character will be upheld by the community. According to Soedjadi (as cited in Sugiyo, 2014: 413) that individual with good character who is aware of the common values of life, aware of their strength and weaknesses, have good habits, think and act positively, and act wisely.

In relation to the view above, there are several characteristic values of the Gorontalo community. These character values are very well-known and being discussed as they influences the family, community and even the state lives. The character values as depicted in various Gorontalo traditions such as culinary tradition called *kukisi karawo* or karawo cookies.

Kukisi Karawo is very well-known even in outside Gorontalo. *Kukisi karawo* is a traditional cookies identic with the traditional embroidery of Gorontalo textile called *karawo*. This handicraft embroidery has been done by female population in Gorontalo since the 17th century. Initially it was done by young female generation in the region called Ayula of Bulango kingdom. This region now belongs to a regency called Bone Bolango in Gorontalo province. The product was initially used for personal purpose, a piece of cloth with simple motives of geometry, leaves, rose flowers, and of other motives.

From this *karawo* embroidery grows *kukisi karawo*. These cookies are types of cookies with ornaments drawn on top of the cookies just like that of a *karawo embroidery*. The motives are usually of flowers. The flowers depicted in these cookies are very beautiful both from its colors and shapes.

In relation to the description above, the problem discussed in this paper is "how are the characters of Gorontalo community reflected in *kukisi karawo*". To discuss about this *cookies* will be described with the following framework.

2. Theoretical framework

In relation to the problem statement above, the theory that will be discussed here is related to culture and character values.

2.1 Culture

The term culture is etymologically derived from the Sanskrit language “*buddayah*”, the plural form of *buddhi* “mind” which means intellectual faculty, Gonda (as cited in Thohir, 2007: 18-19). The root of the word *buddhi*, the term of culture is within the boundary of “things related to mind”. Thus, culture is the product of mind and reason of the human being. In reference to the term above, Koentjaraningrat (2002: 180) defines culture as whole ideas, actions, and human creations for the lives of human, which will be owned by human being through learning. This means that almost all human actions are “culture: as there is almost no human actions which do not need habituation through learning.

Besides, Koentjaraningrat (as cited in Thohir, 2007: 19) also describes that there are three types of culture manifestation, namely (1) *Ideas*; the manifestation of culture as a complex of ideas, values, norms, and regulations. This cultural system values is the highest level and the most abstract of customs. Therefore, due to cultural values which consists of concepts of everything as something valuable for a community, thus it can serve as a guideline for the lives of that particular community; (2) *artifacts*; the second form of culture which consists of things created by human. This culture produces physical products; and (3) *Activities*; the third form of culture is an activity and patterned action of human being within the community called social system. Social system consist of human activity who interact, correlate with each other according to certain patterns based on the observed regulation. This system is concrete and can be observed.

From three types of culture above, this study will be focused on the third form of culture, human activity who interact with each other. This is strongly correlated with “personality”. Personality is not vastly different with the meaning of this world which embedded in the daily meaning of this world. The popular term of “personality” also connotate with “consistent characters”, hence individuals have certain identity”. In daily communication, it is often said that individual who have certain characters which was consistently and consequently shown, which in turn made that person or individual different from others. (Koentjaraningrat, 2003:99). This description signifies that character in general is

owned by the specific community, then, that personality becomes the character of that particular community. Therefore, the community can be called as civilized community.

The term of civilization is usually used to refer to parts or elements of culture which are soft, progressive, and beautiful, such as: arts, knowledge, ethics in interaction, writing aptitude, etc. This civilization term is often used to call a culture who have technological system, knowledge, arts, and progressive as well as complex community (Koentjaraningrat, 2002:182).

Therefore, as the basic of this paper, this concept is used to find out the form of community behavior in Gorontalo which based on the values of characters as the identity of the culture in the region.

2.2 Character Values

Character, according to Sibarani (2012: 135) is attitude and way of thinking, act, and interact as characters of individual in their attitude, action, and cooperation, in a family, community and their state lives. In other definition, it is said that *character is the sum of all the qualities that make you who you are. It's your values, your thoughts, your words, your actions.* Character becomes part of good individual identity of a person which has been formed through life process through ethical values of that person such as thinking pattern, attitude, and behaviors.

Character values according to Thomas Lickona as cited by Sibarani (2012:141), there are eight most essential and basic characters namely: (1) *honesty*; (2) *compassion*; (3) *good judgement*; (4) *courage*; (5) *kindness*; (6) *self-control*; (7) *cooperation*; and (8) *diligence or hard work*.

Meanwhile, according to the academic paper of Development of State's Culture and Character, Suyanto (as cited in Sibarani, 2012: 142), Kemendiknas formulated 18 characters values which need to be taught to children and young generation. Those characters values are: (1) *religiosity*; (2) *honesty*; (3) *tolerance*; (4) *discipline*; (5) *hardworking*; (6) *creative*; (7) *independence*; (8) *democracy*; (9) *curiosity*; (10) *state's spirit*; (11) *love for the state*; (12) *acknowledgement of*

achievement; (13) friendly/communicative; (14) peaceful; (15) eagerness to read; (16) environmentally friendly; (17) socially friendly; and (18) responsibility.

These characters values are the improvement of the characters values which have been previously stated by Lickona. Based on these two ideas, as the purpose of this study, characters values formulated by Kemendiknas will be used as the basis to identify the character values in “*kukisi karawo*” the traditional cookies of Gorontalo community.

3. Discussion

3.1 The Term *Kukisi Karawo*

Kukisi Karawo is a traditional cookies of Gorontalo adapted from the *karawo* embroidery, the traditional textile handicraft which has been passed down for generations in Gorontalo since the 17th century. Following the vast development of *karawo* embroidery, the Gorontalo government awareness to appreciate this *karawo* embroidery as the traditional product of Gorontalo has been started since 2006, with the Department of Ministry of human rights has issued the Patent Rights on “*karawo embroidery*” as the rights of the Gorontalo community. This patent rights was presented during the Gorontalo province house of representative assembly during the anniversary of Gorontalo province in 16th February 2006. The issuance of this patent rights has strengthened the existence of *kukisi karawo* as the identity of Gorontalo community.

The term *kukisi* is adopted from the English word cookies. Therefore the Gorontalo people pronounced it as *kukisi*. Thus, it is translated as *karawo cookies* in English or *Kukis karawo* in Bahasa.

The term *karawo* has meaning in each of its syllable, it is derived from the words *Kayita*, *Randheya* and *Wo'ala*, which means “relates”, “binds”, and “unravel”. This embroidery needs persistence and perseverance which mostly identified as women’s characters. Therefore, most of the *karawo embroiderers* and *karawo cookies* makers are mostly women.

3.2 How to Make *Kukisi Karawo*

Before the *kukisi karawo* was made, the ingredients are prepared such as the butter, soft sugar, eggs, milk, maize flour, vanilla powder, and flour, as well as the ingredients to create soft cookies such as egg white, and lemon juice/vinegar.

How to make it these cookies is basically similar to the way to create the cookies. It can be shaped into various forms, when they have been molded, they should be baked and cooled in the rack. Then the cookies are ready to be crafted.

As the decoration of the cookies; beat the white egg until it thickens. This is called icing sugar. This icing sugar then divided into several tubes to be mixed with food grade coloring. These decorations which consist of some food graded colors then put into cylindric tubes made from the bread paper or plastic. The tip of icing sugar tubes then carefully snipped to prevent the icing sugar to leak when it is sprayed into the surface of the cookies when decorating the cookies.

The colors that are usually used are the customary colors such as red, yellow, green, and purple. However, these colors are not that strict, it can be adjusted to the variations and the esthetics. In addition to the quality of the taste and esthetic, the hygiene in making this *karawo* cookies are also taken into consideration.

In the past, these cookies were used to be decorated using the coconut sticks. The pictures were fish, birds, or flowers with one color. Colors such as red, green, and red were often separately used. Due to the advancement of technology, the technique to make *karawo* cookies also evolved. The carving becomes more and more soft and sophisticated with combination of beautiful colors and unique as well as beautiful flower shape decoration besides the taste is better. In each piece of the cookies, motives of *karawo embroidery* made from icing sugar are produced. These cookies were decorated beautifully to attract people's attention to buy and taste it.

3.2 Shape of *karawo* cookies

Kukisi Karawo in Gorontalo initially were cookies made from sago, coconut oil, sugar, and egg which added with rum to get rid of the coconut oil



smell. The dough were printed in a mold shaped like bird or fish. Therefore, in the surface of this cookies the eye of the fish or bird was printed and at the tail parts, tail of bird or fish also drawn. Based its shape, these cookies are also known as *biskoi burungi* “bird biscuit”. This painting is simply made from the icing sugar. The applicator is the coconut stick. The sample is presented in the pictures below.

Along with the advancement of itme, the *kukisi karawo* also changes to become more interesting from its shape and color based on the consumers’ interest. The sample is as seen in the picture at the right-hand side :

In addition to the shape above, there are also some modified variations using classical colors and motives to make it more elegant as seen in the pictures below:



3.4 Presentation of *Kukisi Karawo*

Basically the *Kukisi Karawo* is made for the consumption of the public. Nevertheless, there are certain times when these cookies are in high demand such as: 1) during the Eid Al Fitri holiday; (2) to be presented to the guests, either family, friends, or state leaders and ambassadors that come to Gorontalo; (3) as souvenirs; (4) practical gifts.

Regarding the usage of this *Kukisi Karawo*, it can be said that this snack food is very beneficial in addition to become the identity of the local Gorontalo people. It is in line with Foster and Anderson (as cited in Danandjaja, 1997: 187-189) statement that symbolically food can serve these four purposes:

- (1) *As a statement of social binds.* The serving of this food can strengthen the social binds between parties (those who present and those who receive the cookies);
- (2) *As a statement of group solidarity.* Celebration of certain moments such as important days usually present traditional meals which can be enjoyed together.
- (3) *Meal and the peace of the soul.* Certain food can describe identity of a group of other cultural artifacts for the group that used them. This is due to the ability of that meal to restore the peace of the soul or sooth a person's soul after a turmoil. Therefore, immigrants will always prepare their traditional meals in their new place.
- (4) *Symbolism of food in language.* In many languages mood is often symbolizes with the quality or state of a food. Furthermore, it is applied to the english, as one who is angry is often called as boiling mood. Similarly in Bahasa, the villains are often called those with rotten hearts, people with no strong backbone are often said to have "peuyeum soul (having no courage/backbone); and emotional teenagers are often called "half cooked"; beautiful girl is identify with "sweet face"; and those who doesn't smile often said as "sour face".

Thus, it can be said that when collecting meals of a group (tribe, nation) it cannot be separated from the cultural context of that society, either in the way they obtain it, process it, present it, or the function of that food within culture and community (James Danandjaja, 1997:189).

3.5 Character values in "*Kukisi Karawo*"

Creation of *Kukisi Karawo* is usually done in a team of women, and sometimes children. They work in team, and refer to the rules which reflect the behavior or characters such as: honesty, tolerance, discipline, hardworking, perseverance and persistence, creative, democratic, curiosity, communicative, friendly, environmentally friendly, socially care, and responsible. The detail of these values are presented in the table below.

Table: Character values within the *kukisi karawo*:

No	Character values	Description	Character values within the <i>kukisi karawo</i>
1.	Honesty	The behavior implemented as effort to make individual always can be trusted in words, action, and jobs.	In the process of decorating the <i>Kukisi Karawo</i> team does not work on their own him, to take and consume the cookies spread in front of them regardless to abundant cookies available in their presence
2.	Tolerance	Attitude and action to appreciate differences in opinion, attitude, and action with others	Team work according to the color of the flower ornament. For instance, green, yellow, white, etc. If there is a person who is missing in decorating the <i>kukisi karawo</i> then her part will be done by other member of the team.
3.	Discipline	The effort that shows orderly and obedient behavior toward various rules and regulations	The process to decorate the <i>Kukisi Karawo</i> , team work in a very discipline way, as it will influence the agreed target.

4.	hardworking/ perseverance	The behavior that shows efforts to overcome various learning obstacles and accomplish jobs as best as possible.	Team decorates the <i>Kukisi Karawo</i> in a perseverance way and they work hard to avoid risks such as ensuring that the cookies are not placed in open space for too long.
5.	Creative	Think and do something to produce new things that are different from the one currently available.	To produce quality cookies (taste, shape, and esthetic) team has to be very creative to produce new innovation.
7.	Democratic	The way to think and act to judge herself and others.	Team work in democratic way to determine the shape of flowers and the colors. Similarly, in distribution of tasks, usually according to the colors and each work democratically
8.	Curiosity	Attitude and action to always try to know and found out more about things that they hear, see, and learn.	Within the process of decorating the flower, the team works by paying attention to other team member's work due to their curiosity.

10.	Friendly/communicative	The action that show eagerness to talk and interact as well as working together with others.	Team work in harmony, and communicative regardless to the process that demands less conversation to avoid health and hygiene risks
11.	Peaceful	Attitude, words, and action that make others feel happy and safe with our presence.	Team works enthusiastically due to the feeling of kinship.
12.	Environmentally friendly	Attitude and action which always try to prevent damage to the environment, and develop efforts to repair environmental damage that had happened	In the process of making the cookies, environment is important to be maintained by ensuring the cleanliness and hygiene of the cookies.
13.	Socially care	Attitude and action to always help others and community in needs.	This team work has shown their care toward others such as neighbor, family, and friends who would like to have additional income.
14.	Responsible	Individual attitude and action to do her jobs and duties toward others, environment, state, and	In producing the tasty, attractive and hygiene <i>Kukisi Karawo</i> , and to ensure customers'

		God.	satisfaction, team has to work responsibly. This responsibility is shown in accomplishment of tasks according to the motives that assigned to them.
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3.6 Character values of the Gorontalo community

Following the discussion on the character values depicted in kukisi karawo above, the correlation with characters of the Gorontalo people community can be drawn. In general, the Gorontalo people (according to the informant, Hi. Rasyid Kamaru – the Qadhi of Gorontalo city) have the following attitudes:

- (1) Friendly, but can be easily offended;
- (2) Shy;
- (3) Highly tolerant;
- (4) Respect others;
- (5) Generous;
- (6) Care; and
- (7) Assertive

The statement above is almost similar to the statement of the cultural leader Hi. Suwardi Bayi that the attitude of the Gorontalo people can be described as:

- (1) *Pi'ili* “adjective”: shy, friendly, care;
- (2) *O'ayuwa* “attitude”: always humble, polite, and civilized,
- (3) Momadulia: “highly care”, and highly respect others.

These two statements are the general characteristics of the Gorontalo community. Socially, Moorison notes, that “the people of Gorontalo rarely hates other and rarely fight, and also have no negative characteristics. If there are fights, they are mostly due to the traditional alcoholic beverage called saguer...” (Amin,

2012: 59). It indicates that it is possible to have the opposite of the above mentioned attitude, this can be understood due to human nature that can easily change.

Among the behaviors mentioned above, mostly are reflected in the *kukisi karawo* culinary — the behaviors are loyal, care, highly tolerant, respect toward others, friendly, humble, polite and civilized. Also, there are also several unique characters of the Gorontalo people who put home in high regard. Regardless to their shabby appearance, and low income, they will always put a high priority on their residence. This is also mentioned by Moorison that; the Gorontalo people have experienced interesting change in the beginning of 1930s. Since that time, he noted (1931), in Gorontalo, *permanent* houses/house made from concrete have emerged among the common people (Amin, 2012: 59). Almost all people in Gorontalo follow this uniqueness. Hence, one of the efforts to fulfill this need for housing is by working as *karawo* makers or making *kukisi karawo*.

4. Conclusion

Kukisi Karawo as means to inherit the Gorontalo community implements the cultural values related to characters for generations. These character values consist of honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard working, perseverance, creative, democratic, curiosity, communicative, peaceful, environmentally friendly, socially care, and responsibility. The behaviors of Gorontalo community is reflected within the *kukisi karawo* are: friendly, respecting others, care, shy, tolerance, polite, and civilized.

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