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**HIMPUNAN
SARJANA-KESTRAAN
INDONESIA**
STRENGTHENING THE CHARACTER OF THE YOUNG GENERATION
THROUGH VERBAL EXPRESSIONS OF ORAL TRADITIONS
IN THE CUSTOMARY PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

The problem examined in this paper is the role of verbal expressions of oral tradition in Gorontalo on character building for the younger generation. This problem is raised considering how many verbal expressions are embedded in the oral tradition, which in principle can be used as a means to educate the young generation of Gorontalo. For example, 15 kinds of oral literature are always expressed during the ritual processions in Gorontalo to this day. These traditions include: palebohu (advice), tuja'i (traditional poetry), paantangi (traditional poetry), paa'ya lo hungo lopoli (reciprocal poetry). All of these traditions are a means of character education for the younger generation. That is considered important, given the prevalence of embarrassing and frightening events such as brawls among youths, rape, robbery, sexual immorality, and various terrible events in various media or our environment. Such conditions require a clear way of thinking to overcome the degradation of the younger generation's character, which is getting dissolved and carried away by the times' progress. The efforts that have been, are being, and we will be doing, are mentoring through formal education such as schools and non-formal education such as youth organizations or religious lectures. Another effort we may be able to carry out is through oral tradition.

Keyword: *character, generation, expression, tradition, traditional*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country that is rich in cultural diversity. This wealth is an asset that must be maintained, preserved, developed, and employed as a reflection of life to increase cultural resilience. The substantial resilience of Indonesian culture will undoubtedly provide many benefits for the life of its people. The existence of Indonesian culture was born from cultures in all regions that are widespread in this country's mainland. Gorontalo is one of the regions in Indonesia that has different cultural characteristics and values from other regions.

These differences in the cultural characteristics of Gorontalo give a distinctive color to the Indonesian culture. Each group of people who live in a particular area, having different goals and values. In other words, culture is a result of people's thought that grows and develops in that community group. Therefore, culture has a unique role in building a value system that will determine the life goals of a community, region, and even a nation.

Even though each region has different cultural characteristics and values, they have the same aspiration to contribute to the country's progress. Therefore, the culture that is owned by the people in any area must be respected and upheld. It is because culture contains mutually agreed upon functions and values to regulate the people's behavior and lifestyle in the area. The efforts made by the people of Gorontalo who uphold the implementation of traditional rituals as a cultural institution are one example. This effort was made because the people of Gorontalo came from five different customary areas called "limo lo pohala'a" whose customary philosophy is "custom based on sharia, syariah based on the scriptures of Allah (Al-Qur'an). This customary philosophy is then used as a reference in implementing various aspects of cultural activities, including oral traditions in Gorontalo Province.

Based on Van Vollenhoven's research (in Masinbawo, 1997: 142), Gorontalo is one of 19 customary law areas in Indonesia. The designation of Gorontalo as one of these customary law areas is based on two criteria: "culture" or customary rules and "geographical

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by Dokia N Djou

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HIMPUNAN SARJANA-KESUSASTRAAN INDONESIA

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These differences in the cultural characteristics of Gorontalo give a distinctive color to the Indonesian culture. Each group of people who live in a particular area, having different goals and values. In other words, culture is a result of people's thought that grows and develops in that community group. Therefore, culture has a unique role in building a value system that will determine the life goals of a community, region, and even a nation.

Even though each region has different cultural characteristics and values, they have the same aspiration to contribute to the country's progress. Therefore, the culture that is owned by the people in any area must be respected and upheld. It is because culture contains mutually agreed upon functions and values to regulate the people's behavior and lifestyle in the area. The efforts made by the people of Gorontalo who uphold the implementation of traditional rituals as a cultural institution are one example. This effort was made because the people of Gorontalo came from five different customary areas called "limo lo pohala'a" whose customary philosophy is "custom based on sharia, syariah based on the scriptures of Allah (Al-Qur'an). This customary philosophy is then used as a reference in implementing various aspects of cultural activities, including oral traditions in Gorontalo Province.

Based on Van Vallenhoven's research (in Masinambow, 1997: 142), Gorontalo is one of 19 customary law areas in Indonesia. The designation of Gorontalo as one of these customary law areas is based on two criteria: "culture" or customary rules and "geographical

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environment.” As a customary law area, Gorontalo continues to maintain and preserve its people’s traditions, including their oral traditions. In Gorontalo, oral literature, which is part of oral tradition, is more potential or dominant in people’s lives (Baruadi: 1998). There is quite a lot of oral literature in traditional processions in Gorontalo. Sedyawati (1996: 5) considers oral tradition as a conveyed discourse orally, following the methods or customs that have been patterned in a society. For example, in Gorontalo, there are 15 kinds of oral literature containing traditions that have always been expressed during the traditional procession until today. Some of these traditions are palebohu (advice), tuja’i (traditional poetry), paantungi (pantun), and paa’iya lo hungo lopoli (reciprocated rhymes).

The oral tradition of Gorontalo is a cultural product and ancestral heritage and a series of life values that can be used as a guide for life. These values are conveyed through the diction and lines of the Gorontalo oral tradition, which are full of advice, such as advice always to be the right person, build good relationships with parents, maintain a friendship with the community, run a harmonious household, and maintain relationships with The Creator. These pieces of advice will be useful for the community if used as a guide for life.

Besides, the Gorontalo oral tradition can be employed as a means of character building. This function’s importance is based on the fact that many events in various regions show the degradation of this generation’s character. For example, brawls among youths, rape, robbery, fornication, and various other terrible events are happening around us and can be witnessed through sharing information media. The character of the younger generation is at a very worrying point. This nation’s morality has deviated from noble norms, ethics, religion, and culture (Hasana, 2016: 19). Overcoming these problems certainly requires clear thinking.

This condition encourages and forces all elements of society to improve the behavior of the younger generation. The development of each individual’s behavior differs from one another. Each student’s development is influenced by self-character from birth, self-image, and environment (Mappiare: 1982). The environmental influence in question includes the cultural life that the community lives in its growing environment. This influence will then shape the character of the generation. A character appears in the daily life of an individual. Character is the same as behavior, temperament, psychological traits, and morals that distinguishes a person from others (Poerwadarminta, 2007: 521). Something that is done repeatedly will become a habit that instills a culture in the subconscious mind. Thus, the values of goodness instilled in each individual will naturally form the appropriate behavior and character.

It is necessary to make various efforts to achieve these expectations. The efforts that have been, are being, and will be carried out, are mentoring through formal education such as schools and non-formal education such as youth organizations, religious lectures, and cultural activities. One of the efforts related to cultural activities that we can carry out is the Gorontalo oral tradition. The verbal expressions it contains can contribute to character building for the younger generation. It is due to verbal expressions embedded in the oral tradition, which in principle can be used as a means to educate the young generation of Gorontalo as part of our nation’s generation.

DISCUSSION

Gorontalo Oral Tradition

Gorontalo is one of the regions that are rich in culture. One of them is the oral tradition contained in the oral literature of Gorontalo. Gorontalo oral literature has existed for a long time and is trying to be preserved by its people. There are 15 varieties of oral literature from Gorontalo, which Tuloli (1991) divides into the following oral traditions.

1. *Tuja’i*

Tuja’i is oral literature in poetry that the number of lines does not bound rhymes but. Tuja’i is usually performed in a marriage proposal, which in Gorontalo is called



tolobalango, weddings, coronations of kings, lemon baths (a tradition for girls), conference titles, and commemoration Islamic holidays.

2. *Palebohu*
Palebohu has similarities with Tuja'i. Both are oral Gorontalo literature in rhyme poetry and are not bound by the number of lines. Palebohu is usually conveyed as advice to people entering a new phase of life, such as to a bride and groom who has just officially become husband and wife or to someone who has just been appointed as a leader. For the bride and groom, palebohu usually contains advice on marriage and tips for living a married life. Meanwhile, for someone who has just been appointed to be a leader, it contains more advice about being a good leader.
3. *Tinilo*
Tinilo is an oral tradition or oral literature of Gorontalo in the form of a rhyme pantun where each verse consists of 4 lines. This oral literature contains flattery, entertainment, prayer, history, or solicitation. The delivery is in the form of poetry that is chanted together in certain traditional ceremonies. One example is the hunding, which is the tradition of cutting hair for newborns, commonly known as aqiqah, wedding ceremony, and ceremony for the 40th day of death.
4. *Lohidu*
Lohidu is a type of rhyme pantun in the Gorontalo language, consisting of four lines. It can be demonstrated by one person or two people reciprocally.
5. *Bungga*
Bungga is Gorontalo's oral literature in the form of non-rhymes poetry and is not bound by the number of lines. This oral literature is used to encourage a group of people, such as those who are working. It usually acts as an encouraging command.
6. *Pantungi*
Pantungi is oral literature, which is the same as poem in Indonesian. Some have rhymes, and some do not. Like any pantun in general, Pantungi also has a rule where each verse consists of four lines.
7. *Tanggomo*
Tanggomo is Gorontalo's oral literature expressed rhythmically in narrative poetry and is not bound by the line number rules. The storyteller conveys it according to the existing social context. Besides, it also contains history or predictions.
8. *Mala-Mala*
Mala-mala is a non-rhyming poem that is not bound by the rules of the line number. This oral literature contains an invitation or appeal.
9. *Taleningo*
Taleningo is a kind of rhyme poetry containing advice, where each verse consists of four lines.
10. *Leningo*
Leningo is a rhyme pantun where each verse consists of four lines. This oral literature contains proverbs, wise words, or expressions that can be used as a guide for life.
11. *Lamanu*
Lamanu is a type of rhyme poetry that consists of only two lines. It contains riddles, figures of speech, or parables.
12. *Bunito*
Bunito is a kind of poetry that contains a spell. It is usually said by a shaman during the healing process of an illness, before going to war, or while occupying a new home.
13. *Wungguli*
Wungguli is an oral tradition in the form of prose. It usually contains a saga, story, legend, genealogy, or life history of a character.



14. *Pilu*

Pilu is prose containing fairy tales of humans, animals, and plants.

15. *Tahuli dan Tahuda*

Tahuli and *Tahuda* are the oral traditions of Gorontalo, pronounced by customary stakeholders or regional elders. *Tahuli* means “message,” and *Tahuda* means “the word of the Prophet.” Thus, this oral tradition contains advice or messages considered to bring good luck and are believed to bring disaster and death to those who break them. This oral tradition is also only pronounced in traditional ceremonies, especially the conferment of traditional titles and customary salutations for regional guests and officials who have served in provincial and district / municipal areas in Gorontalo (Djakaria, 2017: 151).

Those are some forms of oral tradition which are also included in the Gorontalo oral literature. These various types of oral traditions are presented in separate customary processions for specific purposes. The expressions conveyed through the Gorontalo oral tradition contain educational values that can be used to build the character of the younger generation.

Strengthening the Character of The Young Generation through The Gorontalo Oral Traditions

Character building is being promoted from various lines by the government, society, as well as parents. Various sectors, such as education, which are the main forum for building and improving the quality of the younger generation’s character, are also encouraged to collaborate. The legal sector also takes part in legal reforms that can suppress law violations related to character. Also, the cultural sector cannot be sidelined. The values contained in Indonesia’s cultural diversity can be used as a means of character building. One of them is through the Gorontalo culture related to the oral tradition in the traditional process. The Gorontalo oral tradition is expressed through oral literature, which is full of character-building values.

In essence, character building has several pillars. According to Suyanto (in Asmani, 2008: 50), there are nine pillars of character building, namely: (1) Love to God and all of His creation, (2) Independence and responsibility, (3) Honesty or trust, (4) Respect and courtesy, (5) Generous, helpful, mutual cooperation, or cooperation, (6) Confidence and hard work, (7) Leadership and justice, (8) Kindness and humility, and (9) Tolerance, peace, and unity. These pillars must be developed through the various lines and sectors described earlier. Through the Gorontalo oral tradition, the strengthening of character building based on these pillars can be described by the following groupings.

1. Character Building Related to The Individual

Character building related to the individual is needed to teach children to love and be kind to themselves. This teaching will directly shape a good personality or behavior from within. Examples of characters related to the individual are independence, responsibility, trustworthiness, self-confidence, hard work, the courage to make decisions and not doing bad things. Take a look at the following *tahuli* fragment.

2

Tahuli ode diti mooli

Message for the younger generation

Po'opiyohe pi'ili wau popoli

Watch your manners and behavior

Taali butu asali

Take care of your home country

Motombulu to amali

Good service must be practiced

The *Tahuli* fragment contains a profound message for the younger generation that they have to maintain their manners and behavior to protect this country and provide good service or dedication. This message recommends having good behavior to provide a good impact on the nation and country. It is an example of the value of self-oriented character building. A good personality will undoubtedly give birth to a good relationship with the social environment or with God.



2. Character Building Related to The Social Environment

This character building is related to the social environment in the form of relationships with society and peers. Relationships and social interactions can influence a person's character. The unfavorable influence of the environment will contribute to the failure of children's character building. Likewise, the evil character of the children will affect their relationship with their social environment. Therefore, it is essential to teach the younger generation about the urgency of having an excellent character to establish relationships with their environment and maintain social stability. These character values can also be strengthened through the following verses or diction.

<i>Ti mongoli potaabia</i>	Live with compassion
<i>Dila posangaja to la'ia</i>	Avoid scolding each other
<i>Dila bolo polo'ia hilotola</i>	Do not speak out loud
<i>Uito u moali lii'ola</i>	It will lead to the dispute
<i>Uito u mo'obuubuuatola</i>	It will cause the fight
<i>Ti mongoli potooli' anga</i>	Live in harmony and peace
<i>Dila bolo pototoom buanga</i>	Do not instigate each other
<i>Dila pomite-mite batanga</i>	Avoid putting others down
<i>Wonu ma moali bijana</i>	If it has become a slander
<i>Mo'ohina sama-sama</i>	You will be humiliated together
<i>Ti mongoli mo'iisingia</i>	Live with mutual respect.

The palebohu lines contain advice to maintain relationships with the social environment. Those lines advocate living in mutual love and politeness, living in harmony and peace, mutual respect, and full of tolerance. These characters will maintain good social relations and avoid disputes and bad social conditions. One of the reasons for brawls among adolescents is the lack of affection, mutual respect, and tolerance. If the strengthening of the values in palebohu poetry can be applied optimally to the younger generation, social problems such as brawls among students, fornication, or bullying can be suppressed.

² <i>Motidupapa to ayuwa</i>	Humility
<i>Oduwuwa lo u tombuluwa</i>	Many people will appreciate
<i>Moti'uda'a to pi'ili</i>	Snobbism
<i>Daata u mowali bali</i>	Many people will be hostile
<i>Huta duta-duta'o</i>	Where the earth is stepped on
<i>Hulungo wuntu-wuntu</i>	There the sky is upheld.

Apart from Palebohu, character values related to the social environment are also reflected through Tahuli. The first line explains that being humble will lead to appreciation from others. However, pride or pride will result in many enemies. The adage "where the earth is stepped on, there the sky is upheld" suggests that we are obliged to obey all rules and norms applied in the environment we live in, interact with, and develop. The illustration mandates to always maintain a relationship with the social environment through educated characters.

3. Character Building Related to Family/Parents

Having a good relationship with parents and having commendable behavior towards parents are examples of attitudes that can be used as benchmarks for children's character. Parents are the figures closest to children. Family is the first place to gain knowledge and



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build character. Most children with flawed characters come from unharmonious families or receive the wrong character building. Therefore, every young generation must know and improve their family and parents' character.

<i>Ti maama woli paapa</i>	Mother and father
<i>Wanu bolo ohuata</i>	If you hurt their hearts
<i>Batanga malo masasa</i>	You will have a hard time
<i>Hilalanga hi tapata</i>	And you will be roasted
<i>To tulu lo naaraka</i>	In the fire of hell
<i>ti paapa woli maama</i>	Mother and father
<i>wano bolo otombuanga</i>	If you scold them
<i>malo masasa batanga</i>	You will have a hard time
<i>hitapata hilalanga</i>	You will be roasted
<i>To naaraka jahannama</i>	In hell

The palebohu fragment contains character values related to parents. As children, each individual must respect, love, and appreciate their parents and family before interacting with the outside environment. The advice in the palebohu clearly states that if a child hurts his mother and father, such as misbehaving, causing problems, saying inappropriate words, he will experience difficulties, such as moral problems, psychological problems, legal problems, even the threat of hell. Therefore, character-building must be started and strengthened from the family, especially by parents.

4. Character Building Related to Religion

Religion is one of the factors that significantly influence the character building of the young generation. The first precept of Pancasila as the state ideology has emphasized that the Indonesian nation is "Belief in the one and only God." The values in the first principle of Pancasila are related to belief in the Creator, religious diversity, and religious tolerance. One of the polemics that is currently troubling the Indonesian nation is the rampant strife between religious communities, friction caused by religious issues, the tolerance that seems to be fading, and awareness of the values of each religion. These phenomena are seen in the following fragments of the Tuja'i verse.

¹ <i>De tonggadu ajali</i>	when death comes
<i>Bolo meenggi u kakali</i>	eternity will be gone
<i>Oyintaliyo dunia</i>	first, the worldly
<i>Mayilo 'otaabiya</i>	attracts people
<i>Maasukali ohuliya</i>	it is challenging to let go
<i>Dee mate o napia</i>	it will be abandoned when death comes
<i>Dunia diila kakali</i>	the world is impermanent
<i>Tuwotiyo u mowali</i>	the sign that happened
<i>Luludemu lo'amali</i>	clean with good deeds
<i>Wolohilawo sabari</i>	with patience
<i>Dunia piloyitohe</i>	the world is a playground
<i>Piohiyo bililohe</i>	it is gorgeous to look at
<i>Aakhiri bomo oohe</i>	in the end, it is scary
<i>Meyilo'opate tohe</i>	turn off the light
<i>Dunia otoli'ango</i>	beloved world
<i>Bo'o racungi o tuhiyango</i>	there is only poison and thorns.



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The advice in the above verses is still general for all religions and beliefs. It reminds us of the certainty of the hereafter to not continue to be complacent with the impermanent world. This advice can certainly make the younger generation think about worldly matters and neglect the affairs of the hereafter. It also contains calls to be tolerant of others, value time, and do more useful things. Good things will happen if all young generations can share these character values. Furthermore, pay attention to the following *tuja'i* lyrics.

<i>To aagama pohutua</i>	'Practice your religion'
<i>Alihu mohumbua</i>	'to live peacefully'
<i>Boli mopoonua</i>	'And live with love'
<i>Duluo kaliimata sahaadati</i>	'Practice the two sentences of the creed'
<i>U pilo jaanjia to bii'ati</i>	'Which is a promise when you are enshrined'
<i>Mola mo'osalaaamati</i>	'Which will save you someday'
<i>Dunia aaherati</i>	'From this world to the hereafter'
<i>Tabia wau puasa</i>	'Pray and fast'
<i>To dunia Malo masasa</i>	'Because in the world you will have trouble'
<i>Wonu motitihata</i>	'If you do not do good deeds'
<i>Mola mo'otoduo naaraka</i>	'You will only go to hell'
<i>Pojakati po pitara</i>	'Pay out zakat and fitrah'
<i>To okakaya lo Allah</i>	'From the treasures given by Allah'
<i>Molamahu pomalihara</i>	'To clean yourself'
<i>Wanu ma oharata</i>	'If you are already rich'
<i>Odelo mopo'omata</i>	'Try to pilgrimage'
<i>Mohaji ode Maka</i>	'To the land of Mecca'
<i>Ode lipu mulia ilata</i>	'To the glorified holy land'

Gorontalo is one of the areas in Indonesia, where the majority of the population is Muslim. Thus, the Gorontalo oral tradition also provides more religious advice, which is dominated by Islam. One of them is the *Pelebohu* oral tradition, as described earlier. This oral tradition provides advice to carry out one's obligations as a Muslim to obtain the goodness of life in this world and salvation in the hereafter. If every young generation of Indonesia, especially Gorontalo, has such a character, then the character problems currently rampant are very likely to be overcome.

The descriptions of the contributions of various oral traditions in building and strengthening the younger generation's character, as previously described, show the contribution of culture in overcoming character problems. However, the question that might arise is how it is applied? What efforts can be made to optimize the role of oral tradition? The answer is quite simple; all parties must be visible and contribute to optimizing this effort. The Gorontalo oral tradition as a cultural product should not only decorate the traditional process. It should also be used as a reference for learning at school or building character at home/family. It is not enough for the younger generation to just listen to these oral traditions. They must also be endeavored to know, study, Practice, and preserve them. If the existence of the Gorontalo oral tradition can be optimized, especially by the younger generation, then the character values contained in it will also be embedded in their life.

CONCLUSION

Today we are witnessing various events that show the degradation of the character of the younger generation. We can witness brawls among youths, rape, robbery, sexual immorality, and various terrible events in various media or even our environment. This condition

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encourages and forces all elements of society to build the younger generation's behavior. One of them is through the contribution of Gorontalo culture, namely the oral tradition.

The oral traditions of Gorontalo are cultural products and ancestral heritage, and life values that can be used as a guide for life. The values of life are conveyed through diction and lines of the Gorontalo oral tradition, full of advice. These bits of advice contain suggestions always to be the right person, build relationships with parents, maintain friendships with the community, run a harmonious household, and maintain a relationship with God. These values will be useful for society if used as a guide for life.

As a cultural product, the Gorontalo oral tradition should not only decorate the traditional process. It should also be used as a reference for learning at school, character building at home/family, or cultural performances. It is not enough for the younger generation to just listen to these oral traditions. They must also be endeavored to know, study, Practice, and preserve them. If the existence of the Gorontalo oral tradition can be optimized, especially by the younger generation, then the character values contained in it will also be embedded in their life.

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