

Character Values in the *Peuratep* Tradition in the Era of Modernization: An Ethnographic Study

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ABSTRACT

The *peuratep* tradition is a form of Acehnese local wisdom practiced through the chanting of Islamic verses, advice, prayers, and traditional lyrics while lulling children to sleep. Although this tradition has long functioned as a family-based medium for transmitting moral and religious values, modernization and the increasing use of digital devices have reduced its practice in family life. This study examines the character values embedded in the *peuratep* tradition and how their transmission changes in the modernization era. This study employed a qualitative ethnographic approach in Pulo Rungkom Village, Dewantara District, North Aceh Regency. Data were collected through participant observation, structured and in-depth interviews, and documentation involving elementary school students, teachers, the principal, parents, and traditional community figures. The data were analyzed through data reduction, value categorization, thematic interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that the *peuratep* tradition contains three dominant character values: religiosity, social care, and love for the homeland. These values are transmitted through religious chants, moral advice, expressions of affection, prayers, and culturally meaningful verses. However, modernization has shifted bedtime routines from oral family interaction to the use of smartphones and television, reducing children's direct exposure to the tradition. The *peuratep* tradition remains relevant as an informal character education medium because it combines emotional closeness, cultural identity, and moral habituation. Its revitalization requires collaboration among families, schools, and communities through parenting programs, local-content learning, and culturally adaptive educational activities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Psychosocial education emphasizes that a child's development cannot be separated from the influence of the social, cultural, and traditional environment that surrounds them. El-Badrin (2019) in *Social Psychology of Education* asserts that "a child's development cannot be separated from the social and cultural environment that surrounds them, because interactions with family and society directly influence the formation of personality and character." Overall, education does not only take place in the classroom, but is also influenced by the child's interactions with family, society, and cultural values passed down through generations (Febriyanti, 2021). In other words, the success of formal education will depend heavily on the support of informal education obtained from family and community traditions.

Aceh is a predominantly Muslim region with rich customs and diverse cultures that continue to be practiced today in accordance with Islamic teachings. This is evident in the *peuratep* tradition, where parents lull their children to sleep by reciting Islamic poetry. This tradition not only creates an emotional closeness between parents and children but also serves as a means of transmitting religious, moral, and social values that are important for children's psychosocial development. Through the recitation of meaningful poetry, children are introduced to Islamic values and the cultural norms of their society from an early age. As stated by Fajria et al. (2024), "tradition functions as a medium for instilling moral, social, and spiritual values, as well as strengthening the social cohesion of a community." Thus, *peuratep* is a family-based educational practice that aligns with the psychosocial perspective, where the socio-cultural environment plays a significant role in shaping the personality and character of the younger generation.

Although the *peuratep* tradition plays a crucial role in shaping children's character, modernization presents its own challenges to its sustainability. El-Badrin (2019) emphasizes that "children's psychosocial aspects are strongly influenced by their interaction patterns and the social environment surrounding them." Changes in the modern, more practical lifestyle and the dominance of digital technology in family life often shift traditional practices passed down orally. This has the potential to weaken *peuratep*'s function as a medium for psychosocial education, as children interact more with digital devices than with their parents through oral traditions. If this situation continues, the religious, moral, and social values contained in *peuratep* will be difficult to fully transmit to the younger generation.

Therefore, creative efforts are needed to revitalize the *peuratep* tradition so that it remains relevant in the modern era. As emphasized by Agussalim (2025), "tradition must be revitalized through educational spaces, cultural festivals, and digital media to remain relevant to current developments without losing the essence of its local wisdom." Thus, tradition has a dual role: maintaining the continuity of local identity while adapting to modern dynamics to strengthen the character of the community. Nurhayati (2020) in the *International Journal on Language, Research and Education Studies* also stated that "the preservation of *peuratep aneuk* runs through three main channels, namely family, society, and the state, and has even been integrated into the form of local content in schools and reintroduced through cultural festivals. Thus, *peuratep* is not just a tradition of the past, but can be integrated into education, cultural policies, and digital spaces to strengthen the identity of the Acehnese people amidst the current of modernization.

However, modernization and changes in parenting patterns have begun to diminish the intensity of this tradition, so not all children of the current generation have the same experience. This situation is interesting to study further, particularly regarding how the character values of elementary school children who have experienced *peuratep* can be identified and differentiated from those of children who no longer experience the tradition. This indicates the need for more in-depth study to understand how the character values within the *Peuratep* tradition can be maintained, transformed, or adapted to the ever-changing life of society.

This study was relevant to contemporary educational and socio-cultural discourse, particularly in the context of character education amid rapid modernization. In the era of globalization and

technological advancement, traditional practices that once served as informal educational media within families tended to be marginalized, resulting in a weakening of value transmission to younger generations (Munira & Musfirah, 2025). The *peuratep* tradition, as a form of Acehnese local wisdom, represented an indigenous pedagogical practice that integrated religious, moral, and social values into everyday family life. Therefore, examining the character values embedded in this tradition was crucial to understanding how local cultural heritage could contribute to character formation in modern educational contexts. The research question can therefore be framed as follows: (1) What character values are embedded in the *Peuratep* tradition in the modernization era in instilling character values in elementary school children. (2) How is value transmission changing under modernization (devices, parenting shifts)?

2. METHOD

This research uses a qualitative research method with an ethnographic study approach. Ethnographic research focuses on real-world settings, enabling researchers to understand phenomena in depth in accordance with the natural situations that occur in community life.

Data collection was carried out through direct observation and structured interviews. The interview stage involved direct and in-depth exploration with informants consisting of 8 students, the principal, teachers and traditional leaders. Respondents were individuals who had a clear understanding of the research topic. The sample that became the object of the research was families who had early childhood children and had elementary school-aged children with an age range of 6 to 8 years in North Aceh Regency, Pulo Rungkom Village, Dewantara District. To obtain accurate data on the character values emerging in children within the *Peurateb* tradition, researchers used an observation instrument. This instrument is structured in a table containing character values, observed behavioral indicators, and a checkmark (✓/X) column. The following table illustrates the observation instrument used in this study:

Table 1. Character value observation instrument

No	Character Value	Observed Behavior Indicator	Number of questions	Emerging behavior	
				✓	x
1	Religious	- Children participate in communal prayers - Children demonstrate respect when religious poetry is recited - Children practice religious teachings according to guidance	5		
2	Social Care	- Children help friends or others during activities. - Children demonstrate a spirit of mutual assistance. - Children respect differences between participants.	5		
3	love of the homeland	- Children enthusiastically sing patriotic songs - Children show pride in local traditions - Children participate in activities with discipline and enthusiasm	5		

Table 2. Student understanding interview instrument

No	Indicators of students' understanding of the peuratep tradition	Number of questions
1	Basic understanding of tradition	2
2	Experiences of following tradition	3
3	The meaning of poetry or songs in peuratep	2
4	Feelings when following tradition	1
5	Values understood by children	2

The validity of the data in this qualitative study refers to the standards of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Creswell, 2010). Data analysis was conducted using the model analysis approach (Miles & Huberman, 1984). The process begins with data collection, followed by data reduction, meaning organizing data in such a way that final conclusions can be drawn and verified, and conclusions are drawn by interpreting the results of the verified classification so that they can be truly accounted for.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

Based on interviews, elementary school teachers view the peuratep tradition as a medium for character education, rich in moral and religious values, and relevant to the needs of student character development in the modern era. Teachers believe that peuratep poetry serves not only as a lullaby to sleep, but also as a means of instilling values in a subtle and repetitive manner.

One teacher stated:

"The peuratep tradition is actually very powerful for children's character education. The poetry contains religious teachings, admonitions for children to obey their parents, be honest, and do good. If these values are instilled from childhood, they will stick with them into adulthood." (Early Grades Teacher)

Another teacher emphasized that peuratep has advantages over formal learning approaches because it is delivered in a warm, emotional atmosphere between parents and children:

"If peuratep is delivered at bedtime, the atmosphere is calm and full of love. Children are more receptive to the moral message than if it is simply explained in class." (Early Grades Teacher)

However, teachers also acknowledge that the practice of peuratep is becoming increasingly rare due to changes in modern parenting patterns:

"Nowadays, many parents prefer their children to sleep while watching cell phones or television. Traditions like peuratep are starting to be abandoned, even though they have significant educational value." (Religious Education Teacher)

The principal views the peuratep tradition as part of local wisdom that is highly relevant to the school's character education strengthening program. He believes that the religious values, social awareness, and love of local culture embodied in peuratep align with national education goals.

The principal stated:

"The peuratep tradition aligns with the character education we implement at school, particularly religious values and good manners. This is an excellent cultural heritage if it can be integrated into education." (Principal)

Furthermore, the principal emphasized the importance of collaboration between the school, family, and community in preserving this tradition:

"Schools cannot function alone. Traditions like peuratep should live within families and the community. The school's job is to support and strengthen these values so they are not lost to modernization." (Principal)

He also added that peuratep revitalization can be achieved through habituation activities and local content:

"If integrated into school activities, for example through local content learning or cultural literacy programs, the peuratep tradition can be reintroduced to children in an engaging way." (Headmaster).

Overall, interview results indicate that teachers and principals have a positive perception of the peuratep tradition as a medium for character education based on local wisdom. Despite facing challenges due to modernization and technological developments, peuratep is considered to remain relevant if revitalized and synergistically integrated within the educational context of families, schools, and communities.

Interviews showed that some students still recognize the peuratep tradition, although the frequency of practice has decreased. Students who have heard or experienced peuratep associate it with the activities of their parents or grandparents when putting their children to bed.

The first student said:

"When I'm going to sleep, my grandmother likes to sing a song softly in Acehnese. She calls it peuratep." (Student 1)

The second student revealed that peuratep contains a message that is easy for children to understand:

"The song contains a message to pray diligently and listen to my parents. I like it because her voice is soft." (Student 2)

Meanwhile, the third student admitted that she rarely hears peuratep because her sleeping habits have changed:

"Now, before bed, I usually watch videos on my phone. There's rarely any singing like before." (Student 3)

From the interviews, students were able to identify the character values embodied in the peuratep tradition, particularly religious values, obedience, and compassion. Although delivered simply, the moral messages in the peuratep poems remained memorable.

The first student stated: *"I remember the message to be a good child and not to rebel against your parents."* (Student 1) The second student added: *"There's also a prayer for us to be smart and useful to many people."* (Student 2) The third student stated that although he rarely heard peuratep, he still understood its values from his parents' stories: *"Mom once told me that peuratep is for children to study hard and love their families."* (Student 3)

Interviews also revealed that students felt an emotional connection when listening to peuratep. This tradition was perceived as a calming and enjoyable experience. The first student stated: *"When I hear the singing, I quickly fall asleep and feel calm."* (Student 1) The second student said: *"I'm happy because it feels like I'm being paid attention to."* (Student 2)

However, the third student felt that peuratep needed to be packaged in a more engaging way to suit the habits of today's children: *"If it were made into a song or video, maybe today's children would like it more."* (Student 3)

Overall, interviews with three students indicate that the *peuratep* tradition is still recognized and understood as a means of instilling character values, although its practice is declining due to the influence of technology and lifestyle changes. Students assessed that *peuratep* contains positive moral messages and creates a sense of security and emotional closeness, thus having the potential to be revitalized in a modern educational context.

Based on field observations, the *peuratep* tradition was practiced in a calm and intimate family setting, primarily during bedtime routines. Parents or elderly family members softly chanted Islamic verses and traditional Acehese lyrics while accompanying children to sleep. The chanting was delivered in a gentle tone, creating a peaceful atmosphere that reflected emotional closeness between adults and children. This interaction indicated that *peuratep* functioned not only as a cultural practice but also as a medium for transmitting moral and religious messages through everyday family activities.

The observation also revealed that the content of *peuratep* chants contained explicit character values, such as religiosity, obedience, respect for parents, and social care. These values were conveyed implicitly through repetitive lyrics, advice, and prayers for the child's future. Children were observed to listen quietly and respond with calm behavior, suggesting that the messages were internalized naturally without coercion. This pattern demonstrated that *peuratep* operated as an informal yet effective form of character education rooted in local wisdom.

However, observational data indicated a decline in the frequency of *peuratep* practice due to the influence of modernization. In several households, bedtime routines were dominated by the use of digital devices such as smartphones or televisions, replacing traditional chanting practices. Despite this shift, families who continued practicing *peuratep* showed strong awareness of its educational value. This finding suggested that while modernization posed challenges to the continuity of the tradition, *peuratep* remained relevant and meaningful when consciously preserved and adapted within contemporary family life.

3.2 Discussion

The younger generation's understanding of the *Peurateb* Tradition is a crucial aspect in assessing the sustainability of this cultural practice amidst social change and technological developments. Qualitative data analysis, conducted through in-depth interviews and field observations, revealed that the younger generation's understanding of the *Peurateb* Tradition exhibits varying tendencies, ranging from partial understanding to minimal knowledge of the tradition's meaning and function.

Most younger informants understood *Peurateb* solely as the activity of rocking and lulling children to sleep. This understanding tends to be practical and limited to functional aspects, without a deeper understanding of the symbolic, religious, and educational values it embodies. This indicates a shift in the meaning of the *Peurateb* Tradition from a meaningful cultural practice to a purely domestic activity. Modernization brings significant changes in various aspects of community life, including child-rearing patterns and traditional cultural practices. Qualitative data analysis, conducted through in-depth interviews and field observations, revealed that modernization has a strong influence on the sustainability of the *Peurateb* Tradition in Acehese society (Murtaza, 2021). This influence is ambivalent, presenting both serious challenges and opportunities for adaptation for the preservation of the tradition.

The *Peurateb* tradition is a form of local wisdom of the Acehese people that holds strong relevance in the context of modern life, particularly in the character development of children from an early age. Although the practice of *Peurateb* has decreased in frequency due to changes in parenting patterns and technological advances, its values remain of high social, cultural, and educational significance. In the modern era, characterized by the accelerated flow of information, individualism, and the dominance of digital technology, the *Peurateb* tradition serves as a balancing medium that instills humanistic and spiritual values. *Peuratep* poetry, rich in prayers, advice, and expressions of affection, serves as a means of character formation that works emotionally and affectively, in contrast to modern educational approaches that tend to be cognitive and based on formal instruction.

The relevance of *Peurateb* is also evident in its ability to strengthen the emotional bond between parents and children. In the modern context, where family time together is increasingly limited, the practice of *Peurateb* becomes an intimate space that strengthens spiritual connections and creates a sense of security for children. This emotional bond has important implications for children's psychological development, including the development of self-confidence, empathy, and emotional stability. Furthermore, the *Peuratep* tradition remains relevant as a means of transmitting religious and moral values. Amidst the challenges of globalization, which brings foreign values and instant lifestyles, *Peurateb* serves as a natural medium for internalizing religious values, politeness, patience, and obedience. These values are conveyed not through coercion, but through the gentle repetition of verses full of symbolic meaning.

The findings indicate that the *peuratep* tradition is not merely a folkloric practice, but a culturally embedded pedagogical medium that supports holistic character formation. Referring to Lickona's character education framework (1991, as cited in Hikmasari et al., 2021), effective character education should be holistic, encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions; authentic and contextual; emotionally grounded in interpersonal relationships; and integrated into everyday life. These characteristics are reflected in the practice of *peuratep*, in which mothers or caregivers gently cradle children while chanting verses containing prayers, advice, and moral messages. Through this intimate interaction, *peuratep* strengthens emotional bonds between parents and children while simultaneously transmitting religious and moral values in a natural and meaningful way.

The *Peuratep* tradition is a form of local wisdom of the Acehnese people that plays a strategic role in holistic character education. As an oral cultural practice passed down through generations, *Peurateb* serves not only as a childcare activity but also as an informal education system that touches on various dimensions of human development, namely the spiritual, moral, emotional, social, and cultural dimensions. In the context of modern education, this holistic approach is increasingly relevant because it positions character formation as a comprehensive process that is inseparable from the cultural context and social relations (Mustakim, 2017).

From the perspective of Islamic education, the religious values embedded in the *peuratep* tradition reflect the central aim of moral formation. This aligns with Al-Ghazali's view that education should cultivate noble character through habituation, guidance, and exemplary conduct (Miswari, 2024). In the Acehnese cultural context, these values are transmitted naturally through repeated religious chants, prayers, and moral advice within the family environment. From a sociological perspective, the religious messages in *peuratep* also function as a form of internal social control, shaping children's moral awareness from an early age. This is consistent with Durkheim's view that collective values internalized during childhood contribute to the development of individual moral consciousness (Virgianti & Hanani, 2023).

From the perspective of Islamic education, religious values as the core of character are in line with the concept of morality in Al-Ghazali's thinking (Miswari, 2024) which emphasizes that the goal of education is the formation of noble morals through habituation and exemplary behavior. This is in line with Acehnese culture. Furthermore, from the perspective of the sociology of education, religious values in *Peurateb* serve as an internal social control mechanism. Durkheim (Virgianti & Hanani, 2023) stated that collective values internalized from an early age will shape an individual's moral awareness.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the *Peurateb* Tradition contains a variety of character values that remain relevant to the needs of character development in the modern era. These values include religious, moral, social, and emotional values integrated into each verse of the poem. Religious values are reflected through the chanting of prayers, the invocation of God's name, and the hope for the safety and blessings of children's lives. Moral values are embodied in messages about good morals, honesty, patience, and humility. Social values are reflected in calls to respect parents, live in harmony, and uphold societal norms. Meanwhile, emotional values are manifested through expressions of affection,

a sense of security, and spiritual closeness between parents and children. These character values retain strong educational power, despite the increasing challenges of their transmission due to the dominance of global culture and changing parenting patterns. This demonstrates that the Peurateb Tradition holds significant potential as a source of character education based on local wisdom. Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed. The *peuratep* tradition should be revitalized as a family-based character education practice by encouraging parents to reintroduce it as part of children's bedtime routines. Parents and caregivers can be supported through community programs and parenting workshops that emphasize the educational value of local traditions in fostering religiosity, social care, and moral development in children. Such initiatives may help strengthen the role of families as the primary agents of character formation. Future research is recommended to expand the scope and depth of the present study. Quantitative or mixed-methods studies could be conducted to measure the effectiveness of integrating the *peuratep* tradition into school-based character education programs and to examine its impact on students' attitudes, behaviors, and moral development. Limitations of this study employed a single-site ethnographic design, which constitutes an important limitation. The research was conducted in one elementary school, allowing for in-depth exploration of contextual practices related to TPACK-based learning environments

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