# Implanting Character Values Based On Local Culture (Tabea Culture) At Early Childhood Education And Development (ECED) Telkom In Ternate Municipality

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***Abstract:*** *The rapidly development of technology and globalization can negatively affect characters. It is therefore necessary to perform various efforts optimally to strengthen the early childhood's characters. This research aimed to figure out the character values of local culture (Tabae culture) and how they were implanted at ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality. The research used a qualitative approach. Its subjects were Class-B students and teachers at ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality who had provided information to answer the problems discussed in this research. The research data were collected using several research instruments before they were descriptively analyzed. The research results showed that the character values based on local culture (Tabea culture) were implanted through learning, habituation, and exemplification. The character values found in local culture (Tabea culture) were reflected in their attitudes, such as being respectful and polite, loving and caring, kind and humble, as well as tolerant and peace-loving.*

**Kata kunci:** *Character Values, Early Childhood, Local Culture, Tabea*

## A. Introduction

Tabea is the native culture of North Maluku community that reflects noble values and specifically characterizes the local society. It is a symbol of respect and appreciation to their seniors in terms of their age. It is a greeting to signify politeness. In addition, tabea is a parenting practice in teaching and nurturing children, in which parents or teachers play as a role model at homes and schools respectively. The diverse local cultures are a social potential in each region that can build its own cultural characters and images, as well as an important aspect in building the cultural image and identity of a region.

The rapid development of technology and globalization negatively affect character building. It is therefore necessary to optimally build characters the youth since their early childhood. Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) is the basis to nurture characters to the best possible extent since character development can have a significant effect on an individual's future. Early childhood begins since a child is newly born up to six years old (Sujiono, 2014). In their early childhood, children have the so-called golden age or the period during which their development

can be potentially optimized to the most. Children can grow and develop well if they can pass through this period well, and vice versa.

Another research on the characters of early childhood conducted by (Prasanti & Fitrianti, 2018) discusses the formation of children's characters in their early development through family, schools, and community. This research reveals how the three settings play some roles in shaping children's characters. The researchers argue that this is because children do not develop their characters unnaturally, rather they pass through and experience a set of processes. Early childhood is the best period to develop characters. Children's early experiences in their family, schools and communities give some contribution to their development. These communities include those where children play, learn and study or take courses to develop their talents. Nevertheless, family is the most influential factor since it is the smallest and first community for children.

Since the main factor that most significantly affect the characters of children in their early ages, according to the said previous study, is family, the writer would like to study the enforcement of children's characters in their early ages by implanting local cultural values. Additionally, shaping children's characters in their early ages by conserving local wisdoms and tabea culture goes hand to hand with the Khairun University's college research foci in the seventh criteria, namely "Institutionalization and conservation of local cultures and wisdoms". The aim is to figure out how local cultural character values in tabea culture actually are and to discover how local culture-based character values are implanted in ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality. ECED Telkom is one of private-owned ECEDs with a fair number of students under the leadership of Mrs. Pipih Sopiah, S.Pd. One of the classes with quite diverse characters is class B. A total of 39 students in this class is taught by Mrs. Mulyana Hasan, S.Pd as the lead teacher and Mrs. Nurlela Babuana as the assistant teacher

## B. Review Of Literature

1. Early Childhood Concept

Children in their early stages are those who are still in their growth and development processes. In the Law of National Education System of 2003, children in early childhood age between 0 and 6 years old. Another definition suggests that children in childhood ages have unique characteristics in their growth and development processes. This is the result of the specific development they go through, depending on their growth and development rates (Mansur, 2005). Piaget argues that the sensory motor phase in children during their early stages occurs at 0-2 years old, up to the pre-operating development phase at 2-7 years old.

The childhood period is also referred to as "golden age". During this period, nearly all potentials of a child undergo a sensitive period for rapid and extraordinary growth and development. The development of children is varied since every individual has their own unique development. Nutritious foods and intense stimuli are needed in these growth and development processes. It is highly easy for children during this stage to imitate what they see in the environment they are growing. If their environment are good, it is highly likely that it affects the children positively, and vice versa (Ormrod, 2008). During this childhood, they are

yet capable of developing the potentials within themselves. They just want to play, to win everything and will even change the rules of play for their own benefit. Therefore, an educational attempt is needed to optimize all of their developmental components, including their physical and psychological developments. In connection to the writer's discussion, some aspects of character building in children in their early stages can be explored from the conservation of tabea culture.

2. Character Education of Children in Early Stages

In Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia, character is defined as having to do with mental, moral, or ethical aspects. It can also be defined as behavior, namely the frequently-shown behavior or simply habit. According to Suyanto in (Sudaryanti, 2012), character means the mindset and action specific to each individual to allow them to live and cooperate in a family, community, nation and country. A child with good characters will be able to make a sound decision and ready to be accounted for its consequence. Character refers to the morality in daily life and something implanted in their heard and a differentiator. Character is not a single event, rather it is an ongoing activity shaped both cognitively and spiritually. Character education enable the formation of children's personality (Achmad, 2019).

According to (Mulyasa, 2012), character education for children in their early stages are more meaningful than moral education since it teaches them how to shape habits on various good behaviors and this will make them aware of and committed to use virtues in their life. Through character building since early childhood, it is expected that the personality will develop and shape their characters when they grow older. Thus, in addition to parents, school settings also significantly affect children's character development in their early ages since it is in the schools that children play and interact with their peers. Therefore, the extent to which teachers apply the habituation of characters towards positive attitude will determine the extent to which children develop their own characters.

3. Local Culture (Tabea Culture)

Tabea according to people living in North Maluku is a cultural value that has been a character full of educational contents. It means the promotion to do good deeds, to behave well both through utterances and body languages. Parenting from the family has a significant effect on how long the tabea culture survives in North Maluku community. The tabea pose is done by smiling while walking and leaning the body a little to the front and one arm straight beside the knee. The tabea pose is intended to respect others. This is consistent with (Nuraini, 2012) who suggests that the character values that can be connected to local wisdoms are (1) curiosity, confidence, creativity, and persistence, (2) love to God/Allah, the universe and everything on and in it, (3) well-mannered and humble, (4) respectful and politeness, (5) loving and caring, (6) responsible, disciplined, independent and hard-working, (7) justice and leadership, (8) honest, and (9) tolerant and peace-loving. In addition, (Iswatiningsih, 2019) argues that continuous and consistent habituation in the society, family and schools can help shape children's characters.

## C. Method

1. Type of Research

   This is a descriptive qualitative study. Such a study is suitable for this research since it investigates the character values in local culture (tabea culture). Using the qualitative descriptive approach, the researcher could depict and describe the events to which the attention are paid qualitatively (Sugiono, 2018). This research aims at describing: 1) how the local culture-based character values (Tabea culture) are implanted in ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality; and 2). what values are implanted in children through tabea culture.

2. Place and Time of Research

   This research was conducted in ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality at Kelurahan Kota Baru RT 07/RW 01 Kota Baru, Kecamatan Tenate Tengah, Ternate Municipality, North Maluku Province. It was conducted in the even semester of 2022/2023 Academic Year.

3. Research Subject

   The subject of this research was students in class B and teachers at ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality who could provide information on the problems under research. There were 39 students and 2 teachers in this class B. The subjects were taken using purposive sampling based on certain considerations.

4. Data Collection Techniques

   The ways the data in this research were collected were as follows:

   a. Observation

   This method was used in the research process by observing the activities done during the teaching and learning processes. It was then followed by determining the focus to which the attention was paid.

   b. Interview

   This method was carried out in a structured way and in person or using a device. This interview was intended to collect data through conversations with the respondents. The data to be collected from this interview were how the local culture-based character values (Tabea culture) were implanted in ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality and what character values were planted in children through Tabea culture.

   c. Documentation

   It was a record of past events (Sutopo, 2006). It could be photographs, writings, and monumental works made by someone. The documentation in this research were pictures of activities in implanting local culture-based character values (Tabea culture) in ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality.

5. Data Analysis Technique

   In this research, the researcher analyzed the data descriptively, i.e., the data obtained from the research instrument were described. The steps taken to analyze the data were as follows:

   a. Collecting the Data

   The data collection was a process of selecting, focusing, abstracting, and changing the raw data in the field before they were collected. The data observed and analyzed in the field were not too different from those collected through

various types, networks, event interrelatedness or data reduced table. The data collected had something to do with the implanting of local culture-based character values (Tabea culture) in ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality.

b. Presenting the Data

The data presented here were limited to provide a set of structured data that allowed to draw conclusion and take the necessary actions. In presenting the data, all concepts related to the implanting of local culture-based character values (Tabea culture) in ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality were described. Therefore, all data in the field were obtained from observations and interviews. As for the documents, they were analyzed to produce a description which eventually could explain the problem.

c. Drawing Conclusions

Conclusion drawing represents the entirety of objects under study or the entire configuration of research object. Conclusions are drawn based on the description of facts presented in the form of transformation with information classified in an integrated fashion. This allows the research to see what they study and decide on the accurate conclusions regarding the research objects. The conclusions are based on the calculation made during the research. This verification or conclusion drawing might be as short as revisiting what the researcher has in mind when writing the it and constitutes a review of the observation.

The verification is carried at the beginning to ensure that the data are accurate. The information obtained from observation, interview, and documentation was primarily the data related to the implanting of local culture-based character values (Tabea culture) as presented through the four analyses above and repeatedly checked in order to produce factual and appropriate final conclusions.

## D. Implanting Character Values based on Local Culture (Tabea Culture)

1. Implanting Local-Based Character Values (Tabea culture) in ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality

The research results showed that ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality had conserved the local culture-based character values well in the school. One of the local cultures learned in ECED Telkom Ternate was Tabea culture. Tabea culture was a proof of politeness in behavior. Tabea culture played an important role in shaping students' characters in building respect and politeness, affection and caring, well-mannered and humble, tolerance and peace-loving. Therefore, it was important to make attempt to implant Tabea culture. Meanwhile, the strategies that teachers at ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality used in implanting local culture-based character values in Tabea culture were: learning, habituation, and modelling. Based on the results of observations that the author has made, the following data was obtained:
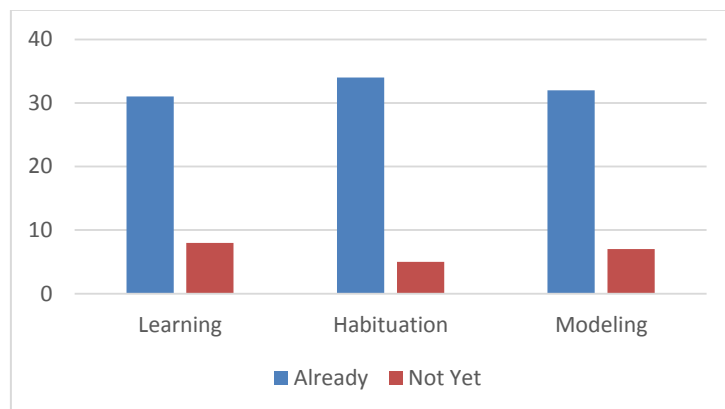
Figure 1. Results of Telkom Ternate City PAUD Teachers' Strategy in Instilling Character Values Based on Local Culture in Tabea Culture

From the data above it can be explained that through the integration of tabea culture in learning can run well. Of the 39 children, there were 31 children who understood what the teacher conveyed, while 8 children showed that they did not understand the tabea culture being taught. There were 34 children who were able to get used to it regularly, while 5 children were not used to doing it. There are 32 children who have been able to imitate the example set by the teacher, while 7 children have not shown this.

a.  Learning



Figure 2. Integration of Tabea Culture in Learning

Tabea culture could be applied in family, community and school settings. Tabea culture at schools aimed at developing and teaching character values in every child. Based on the research result, it was found that ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality administered their character education through local cultures, and of them was Tabea culture. Teachers incorporated materials related to Tabea culture into the learning. Incorporating Tabea culture into the learning would make it easier for students to understand and implement the culture. The integration of Tabea culture value into the learning process held an importance in shaping children's character values. This indicated that incorporating Tabea culture into the learning would eventually support the character education program.

b.  Habituation

The character values in Tabea culture were also implanted through habituation. This Tabea culture in ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality was habituated through the so-called "3S" which stood for Senyum (Smiling), Sapa (Saying Hello), and Salam (Greeting). Every morning the teachers and the

principal would stand side by side in front of the gate to say hello to the children, then students would shake their teachers and principal's hands while greeting them. Next, when students passed through before teachers or those older than them, then teachers would instruct the children to greet while leaning their body to the front and lowering their arms towards the ground.

Thanks to habituation, a behavior that is hard to do at first will then be easier since it is continuously repeated. Also thanks to habituation, a child's behavior will be hard to change or remove. Thus, implanting character values in children can be done using habituation. It allows children not only learn which one is right and which one is wrong, but also to distinguish good behaviors from the bad ones.

c. Modelling



Figure 3. Exemplary Practice by the Teacher

For children, teachers are their models and someone to look up to. Therefore, teachers should provide a positive model for children. Using this modelling, teachers at ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality nurtured the character values by doing good deeds in such a way that students could imitate. Teachers modelled the value deliberately. For example, they would say tabea while leaning their body to the front when passing someone older than them. The modelling that teachers showed would lead to the emergence of characters in children, since they would imitate what their teachers did, such as politeness, respect and manners.

Teachers were frequently considered a model by children. Sometimes, they even listened to their teachers' advices more than their own parents. Therefore, teachers needed to give a good model. Most children would only do something when they were ordered to do so since words had the power to force others, yet it was modelling that could move others' heart. Thus, teachers could also apply some pressure to students to imitate the model. In general, children tend to believe more in what they see, rather than what they hear. Therefore, what teachers say should match what they do, since every single action that teachers do will be watched by students. Teachers could also indirectly tell what students must do by showing it rather than instructing it. In essence, teachers need to model the characters that they want students to develop.

2. Character Values in Local Culture (Tabea culture)

Tabea culture is a symbol of respecting and appreciating others around. Technically, the tabea pose is done by the right hand moving downward towards the ground, while looking at the person being passed by and smiling to them. At a glance, Tabea culture is trivial, yet it is highly important in Ternate customs since it

can create a unique familiarity atmosphere despite neither knowing nor having met each other previously. Tabea culture is a simple pose, yet it holds significant values for Ternate community. Therefore, Tabea culture needs to be conserved.

The character values implanted by teachers at ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality regarding Tabea culture were respect and politeness, affection and caring, well-mannered and humble, and tolerance and peace-loving.

a. Respect and Politeness

The way teachers at ECED Telkom taught students to be respectful and polite was by serving as a role model directly on how to respect and appreciate others. Additionally, they also exemplified how to be polite and to have manners. They taught Tabea culture to students to make them respectful and polite to both their teachers and others older than them and their peers.

b. Affection and Caring

Teachers in ECED Telkom explained to their students the importance of greeting others first while smiling. This was because it showed their affection and that they cared. Additionally, it also enabled harmonious relationship thanks to the presence of care for others.

c. Well-Mannered and Humble

Teachers at ECED Telkom taught their students to keep on being well-mannered when meeting older people, i.e., by leaning their body a little to the front and their hand moving downward when they passed by others to show manners and humbleness. Being humble means constantly respectful and never looking down on others. Being humble to others means being good to others.

d. Tolerance and Peace-Loving

Teachers at ECED Telkom taught their students the importance of tolerance. This was because tolerance would make children unselfish. It could also make children embrace diversity and prevented them from being individualistic who would always put themselves first. This was to shape a tolerant and peace-loving generation.

## E. Conclusion

Three strategies were used by teachers at ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality to implant local culture-based character values in Tabea culture. The first strategy was learning, where teachers incorporated Tabea culture-related materials into the teaching and learning. Incorporating Tabea culture into the teaching and learning made it easier for students to understand and implement the culture. The second strategy was habituation. The Tabea culture was habituated at ECED Telkom in Ternate Municipality by the so-called "3S" strategy, namely Senyum (Smiling), Sapa (Saying hello), and Salam (Greeting). Every morning the teachers and principal would stand side by side in front of the school gate to say hello to the students. Students would then shake their teachers and principal's hands while greeting them. The last strategy was modelling. Teachers directly served as the model by saying tabea while leaning their bodies a little bit to the front while passing by older people. The modelling that teachers showed would allow students to develop characters. This was

because they would imitate what their teachers did, such as being polite, respectful and well-mannered.

The character values found in the Tabea local culture were being respectful and polite, affectionate and caring, well-mannered and humble, and tolerant and peace-loving.

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