

**The Making of Character through Local Culture: Scrutinizing the Madihin
Tradition in the Banjar Community**

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Abstract

Numerous incidents and reports concerning behaviors deviating from societal norms have marred the nation's character. One of the causes is the orientation of education itself, which predominantly focuses on cognitive aspects. Therefore, it is crucial to establish a new educational paradigm based on character education. The objective of this research is to understand how the local art form of Madihin can be implemented as a new paradigm in education, serving as a learning tool through the wisdom embedded in it to shape a cultured and characterized society. The research employs a qualitative descriptive approach with field research. The findings reveal that Madihin can serve as a learning tool with cultural significance. The implementation of Madihin as a learning tool to shape a cultured and characterized society can be provided to the community in the form of: First, serving as 'moral excellence' within the Madihin verses themselves to shape character through the development of virtues that have meaning in life. Second, focusing on soft skills to maintain noble cultural values and

cultivate a holistic mindset. Third, providing knowledge about character with cultural education as the basis for daily behavior.

Keywords: *Learning Tool, Madihin, Cultural, Character Education*

Introduction

Indonesia is known as a country with noble character, where many cultural and ethical teachings have been ingrained since ancient times. This character has even been enshrined by the nation's founders in Pancasila as a philosophy. However, according to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) annual report on the Human Development Index, Indonesia still ranks lower compared to neighboring countries. Reflecting on reality, numerous incidents and reports on inappropriate behavior contradicting norms and teachings have occurred. Ironically, these incidents take place in educational environments, such as cases of bullying, sexual violence, and drug abuse, seemingly tarnishing the nation's character values that have been built over time. Education, as the primary tool for shaping and building the nation's character, should aim to create capable, knowledgeable, morally upright individuals and strengthen religious beliefs.

This issue indicates that the current implementation of education is not entirely correct. The cause lies in the education system itself, which only emphasizes the cognitive aspect. Education is often focused on directing students to achieve high grades, rankings, and so on, without balancing the affective aspect (Ningsih et al., 2017: 193). The concept of the affective aspect relates to feelings, values, appreciation, motivation, and attitudes. Therefore, there is an urgent need to find tangible and strategic steps to build a new education paradigm based on character education in society. Character education has a higher meaning than moral education because it is not just about right and wrong but about instilling habits in life, fostering higher awareness and understanding, as well as promoting care and commitment to applying virtues in daily life (Wahyu, M.S. & Sofyan, 2023: 7).

Indonesia's character is formed alongside its pluralistic conditions, where all its people live alongside diverse cultures and traditions (Ahmad et al., 2023). This diversity has resulted in Indonesia having many ancestral legacies passed down through generations. These legacies are now visible and enjoyed as traditional or local arts. Madihin is one such local literary art originating from South Kalimantan. UNESCO recognized Madihin in 2014 as an "Intangible Cultural Heritage" of Indonesia from South Kalimantan, meaning that Madihin is acknowledged for its existence and needs to be preserved (Sani, 2017: 81). However, the existence of

Madihin is increasingly overshadowed by various new art forms brought about by globalization. Therefore, one effort to preserve it is by using Madihin art as a learning tool in education for young people and the community.

Madihin art was created by the Banjar tribe in the 1800s and is a local art form that became popular on local radios in South Kalimantan in the 1970s (Jahdiah, 2012). Madihin is performed by a pemadihin who recites simple verses in Banjar language while beating the tarbang or tambourine as the only supporting instrument. The term "madihin" itself comes from the word "madah," which is interpreted as delivering a message, corresponding to the content of the verses conveyed by the pemadihin, which often contain advice. The term "petuah" is synonymous with advice given by parents to their children (Wulandari et al., 2019: 75).

Folk poetry in the form of Madihin is unique to the Banjar ethnic group in South Kalimantan. Madihin is spoken as a common folk entertainment in the Banjar language, performed in commemorating national, regional, religious events, political party campaigns, circumcision ceremonies, entertaining distinguished guests, welcoming childbirth, night markets, harvest festivals, charity events, ceremonies to ward off disaster, and ceremonies to fulfill vows (kaul, or nazar), among others. There are six professional criteria to become a pemadihin: the ability to skillfully manipulate words and adhere to the standardized physical form of Madihin, skill in developing themes and messages, vocal skills, musical accompaniment skills, skill in organizing the harmony of the performance, and skill in presenting Madihin in front of the public.

Noor Leha stated that Madihin contains religious values, especially Islamic values dominant in Madihin verses, making Madihin indirectly contribute to educating the community (Leha, 2018a: 273). Kamal added that Madihin plays a role in papadahan or reminders addressed to everyone to always respect human beings, especially parents, maintain health, and preserve faith (Hasuna & Lismayanti, 2017: 401). The functions of local art Madihin as education can be seen from educational values such as socio-cultural and ideological messages, social functions, which can be seen from messages containing social criticism against society, functions as a communication tool, and development functions, as well as functions as a means of fulfilling vows or needs.

In addition to being a visual and entertaining oral art, Madihin art has the potential to be used as an educational tool, sourced from the content of its verses, which often contain proverbs or advice. Several studies on Madihin art have been conducted, but only a few have focused on the character education aspect. A previous study titled "Character Education Elements in Madihin Art" by Galuh Nur Syifa (Syifa, 2022) discussed a mental revolution by comprehensively improving character education through Madihin art. The results showed that Madihin art is relevant to

character education elements, namely responsibility, discipline, tolerance, hard work, and creativity.

Another study was conducted by M. Budi Zakia Sani titled “Madihin Art in South Kalimantan: Axiological Review and Relevance to Character Education” (Sani, 2017). This research discussed the functions of Madihin art in terms of values of sanctity (religiosity and magic), discipline, tolerance, love of the homeland, hard work, creativity, and communicativity. Furthermore, Noor Leha, in his paper titled “Religious Values Study on Madihin by John Tralala,” discussed the religious values such as faith, gratitude, piety, courtesy, peace, and mutual respect found in John Tralala’s Madihin verses (Leha, 2018b). The aim of this research is to understand how local Madihin art can be implemented as a new paradigm in education as a learning tool through the advice contained in it to shape a cultured and characterful society.

Methods

The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach with field research. Qualitative methods involve procedures that yield descriptive data in the form of written words from individuals who can be observed or interviewed. The sample consisted of 4 respondents who are madihin performers. Subsequently, the next steps involved data collection, analysis, and presentation conducted through description.

Discussion

Definition and History of Madihin

Madihin is a traditional musical art form in the culture of South Kalimantan or Banjar, serving as entertainment media and conveying spiritual-religious messages blended with humor, providing educational value to society. The term “madihin” originates from Arabic, namely مدح – يمدح – مدحا (madaha - yamdahu - madhan), which means praising (Munawwir, 1997: 1317).. According to Abdul Djebbar Hapip, Madihin is a distinctive Banjar art form of rhymed poetry accompanied by the beating of tambourines (Hapip, 2008: 114). Another interpretation of Madihin comes from the word ‘madah,’ meaning to speak in verses. Subsequently, ‘madah’ evolved into ‘madahan’ and transformed into ‘madihin.’ Madihin is defined as reciting verses or rhymes accompanied by a musical instrument such as tarbang or tambourine, expressed spontaneously, although some may memorize and pass it down through generations (Asmuni, 2012: 55). Lastly, some suggest that Madihin originates from the Banjar language, specifically ‘papadahan’ or ‘mamadahi’ (giving advice) because the verses often contain advice (Syahriansyah, 2015: 131).

When examining its history, Madihin is estimated to have emerged around the 1800s, marked by the spread of Islam in Kalimantan. In Banjar society, Madihin has undergone development over time (Yulianto, 2010: 258). This development is associated with the influence of Islam in Banjarmasin in the 15th century through trade routes. Islam rapidly expanded under the rule of Sultan Suriansyah, leading to the establishment of the Sultanate of Banjar. This development influenced the governance structure and socio-cultural aspects. Additionally, influences on thought and language created a fusion of cultures still influenced by Hindu and Malay backgrounds within an Islamic framework. This fusion resulted in a new culture: the Banjar culture, emerging from the convergence of these two cultures (Ras, 1990: 10).

In its early development, Madihin served as entertainment for the Sultanate of Banjar (Wardani, 1999: 13). In practice, Madihin utilizes words, and these words are notably spontaneously uttered by the *pemadihin* (madihin artist). These words are spoken accompanied by music, making them more pleasant to hear than ordinary speech, especially as they are structured in poetic verses in the form of pantun (Maswan et al., 1995: 6). Over time, Madihin has remained relevant amidst modern trends, especially during significant events where it consistently appears as part of the opening ceremony.

Learning Medium of Madihin with Culture

Learning tools often refer to pedagogical values, but they can also be linked to cultural values, as expressed by Brata, stating that Pancasila values are one of the cultural learning values of the Indonesian nation packaged by independence figures within the framework of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. Therefore, for the successful cultivation of Pancasila values, culture needs to be one of the foundations of the concept, implementation, and evaluation of character education.

Cultural wisdom serves as the adhesive for a nation's identity and is closely related to a nation's resilience. Hence, this is one reason why culture needs to be one of the foundations of character education. Cultural values mean a general concept organized and influencing the behavior of a specific community related to human correlation and the external scope of knowledge, laws, customs, passed down from generation to generation. These cultural values can be adopted and modified from a particular community for specific purposes, such as designing culture for a limited community in schools for productivity and education purposes (Brata, 2016: 24).

Culture formed based on the members of a particular society on the basis of certain cultural values will influence the behavior patterns of its members. Corporate culture will affect its managers and employees. School culture will influence its

students, and so on. In a nation's culture, progress can be achieved, and it can remain existent in global competition if its people are of high quality. Character is the culmination of an individual's attitude, behavior, motivation, and ability. Without character strengthening, progress for a nation becomes challenging. The character of a nation itself is derived from the cultural values it possesses (Ghufron, 2017: 309).

As per the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2018 concerning the Strengthening of Character Education in Educational Units, cultural values targeted for instillation through character education in schools include religious, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democratic, curiosity, national spirit, love for the homeland, appreciation of achievement, friendliness, love for peace, fondness for reading, environmental awareness, social care, and responsibility. One cultural element closely tied to verbal means for enhancing motivation to become a cultured and characterized person is Madihin.

Based on an interview with informant W, it is stated that:

“Madihin is one of the arts that has its own values and uniqueness in its existence. The uniqueness of Madihin can make it an identity for South Kalimantan and a characteristic of the Banjar people. Because every sentence uttered has the same end rhyme and is in harmony with the beat of the tambourine. A pemadihin is required to have high linguistic intelligence, broad insight, musicality, and good ability.”

From the above statement, it can be concluded that Madihin oral literature contains cultural values that need to be developed, utilized, and preserved in the context of efforts for the development and creation of regional oral literature. The preservation of this oral literature is deemed crucial because it holds values for learning. Thus, Madihin can be used as verbal means to motivate learning.

Cultural and Character Education of Madihin in Social Scope

The progress of time brings modernization that is always associated with Western culture. This can be seen in pop music culture, which tends to be more popular among young people compared to traditional arts. If oral literature like Madihin is not popular and sought after, it can be certain that this valuable Banjar cultural heritage will slowly disappear. Therefore, there is a need for documentation in various forms of work like this to ensure its sustainability. However, if Madihin continues to be disseminated, it will gradually endure. Moreover, Madihin contains elements of cultural and character education that function as expressions of thoughts, attitudes, and values in society (Faridah, 2016: 22).

In general, Madihin is infused with a pragmatic humor element that is highly effective for social criticism to improve social order. Moreover, what is conveyed by pemadihin is more persuasive, making it effective and potential for shaping community behavior in cultural and character education (Salam, 2019: 35). In an interview with informant S, many educational and cultural values in the social scope are included in Madihin, including values of proselytizing, religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, responsibility, and the value of prosperous life.

Specifically, cultural education values provide a way to respect and give to others to perform activities that are important to them through tolerance as a form of culture in Indonesia. The value of discipline is also included because it is able to obey all the structures and procedures in the presentation of Madihin and disciplined behavior by paying attention to the established time. Eventually, disciplined behavior breeds good behavior and compliance with rules that do not harm others. In addition to cultural education, there is also character education covering religiosity values that can be a model or means in the formation of formal and non-formal learning processes. Moreover, the value of honesty characterizes character education values because it conveys something as it is, without exaggerating or diminishing.

Madihin as a Learning Medium in Cultural Reflection

The Republic of Indonesia Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (UU Sisdiknas) formulates the functions and objectives of national education that must be used in developing educational efforts in Indonesia. Article 3 of UU Sisdiknas states that:

“National education functions to develop and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to enlighten the life of the nation. It aims to develop the potential of learners to become individuals who are faithful and devoted to the One Almighty God, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.”

Therefore, to develop the potential of society, there is a need for noble cultural values that serve as a source for thinking and behaving.

To gain insight into the meaning of cultural and character education, the nation needs to explain the terms culture, national character, and education. In education, this is a process of enculturation, serving to pass down values and achievements that are a source of pride for the nation and make the nation known to other nations. In addition to passing down, education is a presentation; education has the function of

developing cultural values. The process of developing values that form the basis of character requires a continuous process (Perbukuan, 2011: 78-79).

Starting from this, the art form of Madihin becomes one of the benchmarks for the Banjar community in using advice as an educational tool because there is 'moral excellence' or morals built on various virtues that, in turn, only have meaning when based on values prevailing in culture (nation). The character of the Indonesian nation is the character possessed by Indonesian citizens based on actions considered virtuous based on values prevailing in Indonesian society and nation (Hakim, 2014: 160).

One form of application of Madihin culture in learning tools, according to informant A, one of the vocalists of Madihin poetry, is as follows:

"One of the uniqueness and distinctiveness of Madihin art as a learning medium is that Madah becomes one of the messages and advice with character-building elements, from parents to children. This message is not conveyed only once but until adolescence, even adulthood."

Thus, the statement above can be drawn into several learning tools that can be provided to the community as a form of education, as follows:

1. Character as 'Moral Excellence', provision through Madihin poetry builds character as one of the virtues that have meaning in life.
2. Development or 'Softskill Development', development in the form of soft skills so that the adaptation of teenagers to external culture still maintains noble cultural values, becoming a holistic mindset.

Cognitive formation is the knowledge of character with cultural education as a basis for everyday behavior in self-mapping in the learning process. Thus, the cultural values of Madihin become one of the references for the community in the learning process in both internal and external environments.

Conclusion

Culture formed based on the members of a particular society on the basis of certain cultural values will influence the behavioral order of its members. The character of a nation is derived from the cultural values it possesses. Therefore, it is important to make culture the foundation of character education. Local Banjar art form, Madihin, can serve as a learning tool with culture because it contains cultural values that need to be developed, utilized, and preserved in the efforts of guidance and the creation of regional oral literature. In general, Madihin is wrapped in elements of pragmatic humor that are very effective for social criticism to improve the social order of society. Moreover, what is conveyed by the Madihin performer is more

persuasive, making it effective and potential in shaping societal behavior in cultural and character education.

Madihin embodies learning values, making it a motivational tool in verbal learning. Madihin, as cultural and character education in the social sphere, is reflected in its verses that have values of religious teachings, religiosity, morality, honesty, tolerance, discipline, responsibility, and the value of prosperity. The implementation of Madihin as a learning tool to shape a cultured and characterized society can be provided to the community in the form of: (1) Education, as 'moral excellence' within the Madihin verses themselves to shape character through the development of virtues that have meaning in life. (2) Development of soft skills to maintain noble cultural values and form a holistic mindset. (3) The aspect of cognitive formation in character knowledge with cultural education as the basis for daily behavior.

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