

# Revitalizing Aluk Pare to Strengthen Farmers' Character Through North Toraja Local Culture

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## ABSTRACT

Aluk Pare represents a traditional Torajan agrarian belief system governing all stages of rice cultivation, from land preparation to post-harvest rituals. It embeds moral and ethical values such as hard work, cooperation, responsibility, and respect for nature. However, modernization and lifestyle changes have eroded these values, weakening farmers' work ethic and character. This study aims to (1) identify character values embedded in Aluk Pare relevant to farmers' character formation; (2) design and implement a revitalization model of these values in modern agricultural practices; and (3) evaluate the model's impact on farmers' behavioral transformation in North Toraja. Using a Participatory Action Research approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and focus group discussions with farmers and cultural leaders. Qualitative analysis followed Miles & Huberman's model. Results reveal that revitalizing Aluk Pare strengthens farmers' responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and ecological obedience. The culture-based training enhanced farmers' ecological awareness and social solidarity. Hence, revitalization of local wisdom functions not only as cultural preservation but also as an effective character education strategy supporting sustainable agriculture in North Toraja.

**Keywords:** Aluk Pare, farmers' character, local wisdom, character education, North Toraja.

## INTRODUCTION

Agriculture in North Toraja is not merely an economic activity, but also a manifestation of a value system rooted in the local culture. Aluk Pare—part of the Aluk Todolo belief system—governs the entire agricultural cycle, from land preparation, planting, and rearing to harvesting [1]. This system instills the values of hard work, responsibility, and mutual assistance, as well as the observance of the rules of nature. In the traditional Toraja worldview, the balance between humans, nature, and ancestral spirits is a prerequisite for a successful harvest.

However, the processes of modernization, mechanization, and changes in the lifestyle of the younger generation have weakened the transmission of agrarian cultural values. As the economy shifts from agriculture to services and tourism, the practice of Aluk Pare has become increasingly rare [2]. Consequently, the character of farmers, once synonymous with perseverance and a sense of responsibility, has been displaced by materialistic orientations [3].

The central problem of this study is the degradation of farmer character due to the weakening of local values. Sustainable development in the agricultural sector requires human resources with resilient character, discipline, and environmental care [4].

The purposes of this study are:

1. To identify character values in Aluk Pare relevant to the formation of farmer character.
2. To design a revitalization model of these values within the context of contemporary agriculture.

3. To evaluate the impact of model implementation on changes in farmer character and behavior in North Toraja.

This research occupies a unique position (*state of the art*) as few studies utilize Aluk Pare as a source of local pedagogy in farmer character education. Previous research has largely highlighted Aluk Todolo from anthropological perspectives [5], rather than the applicative side of character education.

### Theoretical Foundations

The concept of character education emphasizes the development of moral values, ethics, and social responsibility [6]. In the Indonesian context, character education based on local culture is considered effective because it integrates traditional wisdom values tested by community life [7]. Local wisdom provides a worldview that develops across generations to maintain harmony between humans and their environment [8].

### Previous Research

Various studies demonstrate the effectiveness of cultural approaches in character formation. Sutaryo [9] shows that revitalizing local cultural values increases the moral awareness of village communities. Research by Darmaningtyas [10] emphasizes the importance of education that fosters independence from external values. In Toraja, Rambu [5] examines the tension between Aluk Todolo and modernity, while Bigalke [2] outlines the social dynamics of Toraja society. This study complements these works by emphasizing applicative character education.

### Conceptual Framework

This study is based on a constructivist paradigm viewing cultural values as contextual learning sources. The main values identified include:

- a. Hard work (*basssa' me'karang/mara'ta'*): an unyielding spirit.
- b. Mutual cooperation (*situndu-tunduanan*): solidarity in collective work.
- c. Responsibility (*maruru' unnangkaran pasassanan tengko*): honesty regarding work results.
- d. Obedience to nature (*kinaa umpakarai lipu daenan*): respect for natural cycles.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study uses the Participatory Action Research (PAR) approach [11], placing local communities as active subjects.

### Location and Subject

The study was conducted in two *lembang* in North Toraja Regency. Subjects included 20 active farmers, 5 traditional leaders, 2 agricultural extension workers, and 3 cultural observers.

### Research Procedure

The procedure followed four main stages: (a) Preliminary study through field observation; (b) Value exploration via in-depth interviews and FGDs; (c) Module design for character training; and (d) Implementation and evaluation of character changes using pre-post tests and reflective interviews.

### Data Analysis Techniques

Qualitative analysis was carried out through data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing [12, 13]. Data validity was tested through source and method triangulation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Character Values in Aluk Pare

Field results identified 12 main character values: hard work, honesty, mutual assistance, responsibility, perseverance, modesty, caring, obedience, sincerity, patience, love of the fatherland, and respect for ancestors.

### Implementation and Changes in Farmer Character

The three-month training utilized value discussions and simulations. Pre-post test analysis showed significant improvements in responsibility (23%), cooperation (19%), and environmental concern (21%). Farmers demonstrated higher discipline and respect for natural cycles.

## DISCUSSION

These findings reinforce the theory of culture-based character education [7]. Revitalization acts as a "cultural pedagogy" shaping character through collective experience [6]. The principle of respect for nature aligns with the Education for Sustainable Development paradigm [4]. Socially, activities such as *Ma'bua pare* and *tudang sipulung* foster a sense of togetherness that strengthens community solidarity.

## CONCLUSION

Aluk Pare contains character values relevant to modern farmers, including hard work and environmental concern. The PAR-based revitalization model proved effective in improving work ethics in North Toraja. This strategy serves both as cultural preservation and a sustainable education strategy.

### Suggestions

1. Local governments should support Aluk Pare-based character training programs.
2. Educational institutions should integrate local cultural values into the agricultural curriculum.
3. Further research should extend this model to other agrarian regions.

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