



## Tracing Spiritual Traces and Local Wisdom: An Exploration of Educational and Religious Values in the Tradition of Welcoming to the People of Tanjungbalai City

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### **Abstract**

This research aims to determine the educational and religious values that are embedded in the tradition of menyonggot. The method used in the menyonggot tradition is a descriptive qualitative research method. With data collection techniques in the form of interviews, observation and documentation. Interviews were conducted with one community figure in the city of Tanjungbalai and ordinary people. The results of the research show that the values contained in the tradition derive from religious values such as praying together and educational values such as friendship by eating together and mutual cooperation. So in the tradition of celebrating these values are still established and intertwined today.

**Keywords:** *Menyonggot; Educational Values; Religious Values*

### **Introduction**

Country of Indonesia is a large country with thousands of islands in it. With its vast territory, Indonesia has an extraordinary diversity of tribes and civilizations. Under the auspices of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, Indonesia's diverse and rich cultural heritage has supported the unity and unity of the country (Defiana & Falaq, 2024). Indonesia is known as a pluralistic country consisting of various races, ethnicities and cultures. Indonesia's plurality affects many cultures and traditions from each region in Indonesia (Rohmatun The et al., 2024). Value is a concept that contains rules that are declared correct by society because it contains human nature which in turn is a general feeling, a general identity therefore becomes a general sharia and will be reflected in human behavior (Jempa, 2017). Value is beneficial in the stability of life in society. So value is a guideline that according to a group of people is considered good which is a reference in attitudes or behaviors in society (Faozi & Himmawan, 2023). Value is also an idea or concept of what a person thinks and is considered important in his life (Jempa, 2017). Values are considered as benchmarks and principles for weighing or judging something about good or bad, useful or useless, appreciated or reproached (Jempa, 2017). The value of education can be understood as a predisposition or norm of behavior that is often internalized in the individual without being explicitly learned through the formal process of education. This shows that these principles can be applied in various aspects of daily life, even to people who have never entered the formal education system (Di & Erawati, 2021). Educational value is a measure used to assess how good and correct a

person is in his life and environment (Nurfadila et al., 2022). To live a harmonious and balanced life, humans need values that bind and guide them. These values are sometimes derived from things that are fun without pressure (Diana, 2023).

Education is a learning process that aims to develop individual potential to become better and qualified. Education can be done in various institutions such as schools, colleges, or job training institutions (Yuherman, 2023). Education is an essential need that every individual must have. In various religious teachings, there is a strong recommendation that every individual strive to get an education. Education can be obtained through formal, non-formal, or informal channels (Sukmawati, 2013). Education is an absolute necessity for human life that must be fulfilled throughout life (Ellawati et al., 2023). Spiritual education consists of two words, namely education and spiritual. Etymologically, education comes from the word "paedagogie" from the Greek, consisting of the word "paes" meaning child and "agogos" meaning to guide. So paedagogie means guidance given to children (Faozi & Himmawan, 2023). Religion is also a symptom that is so often "ubiquitous," and religion is concerned with human efforts to measure the depth of meaning of one's own existence and the existence of the universe. In addition, religion can evoke the most perfect happiness of birth and mind as well as feelings of fear and horror (Jempa, 2017).

Tradition comes from the Latin word Tradition which means to be passed on. Tradition is described by Kuncoroningrat as a common behavior in human civilization that naturally influences the actions and responses made by members of the daily community (Defiana & Falaq, 2024). Tradition is an activity that has become a social habit and is carried out between generations through a process of socialization, reflecting the existence of its supporters (Nur, 2024). Tradition is something that is continuously carried out in people's lives and passed down to their children and grandchildren. Tradition has a function to help the blind in educating their children to become mature and wise as members of society. The traditions that we can feel or can still see are the local traditions that are found around us (Firmansyah, 2023).

Menyonggot is an oral tradition, which is a traditional cultural activity of a community group that is inherited from generation to generation with oral media, both in the form of the arrangement of verbal words and other non-verbal (non-oral) traditions. The structure of the dictionary and the verbal and non-traditional formulas of verbal verbal can be understood through performance (Aisyah, 2022). Manyonggot is a tradition of the ceremony of inviting the spirit in the human soul whose implementation is identical to being carried out in a state of grief and in relation to the sadness and hardship experienced by a person. This Manyonggot activity is carried out with the chanting of words of encouragement and advice to people who are sick or have problems so that the problems faced can be overcome (Sari & Ritonga, 2024). The tradition of menyonggot which has many values needs to be studied the educational values contained because the tradition of menyonggot is an integral part of the culture of the people of Tanjungbalai North Sumatra, which is not only a series of cultural activities, but also a medium that is rich in social and moral lessons for the younger generation. This tradition not only enriches practical skills in carrying out the welcoming process, but also conveys deep values about religion, cooperation/mutual cooperation, and social solidarity.

One of the educational values that stands out in the tradition of welcoming is mutual cooperation. The welcoming process involves the active participation of the entire community and the local community, who work together to complete the task. This gotong royong activity strengthens social ties between community members, teaches the importance of working together and helping each other in achieving common goals. Through this experience, the Society learns that cooperation is the key to overcoming challenges and achieving success, which is an important value in social education. Through mutual cooperation and social solidarity activities, this tradition shapes the character and cultural identity of the Tanjungbalai community, by teaching valuable lessons about togetherness and helping others. Therefore, it is important for formal and informal education to recognize and utilize the potential of social

and moral education contained in these traditions to strengthen the cultural awareness and character formation of the community and the children of today's young generation.

In addition to educational values, in the tradition of Mengyonggot, there are also religious values, namely Praying Together to pray for people who have been songgot to recover from illness and are given smoothness in carrying out their original activities, as well as being given convenience in carrying out worship. However, in the midst of the onslaught of foreign cultural influences that are increasingly massive into the country, it has the potential to erode the traditions that exist in society. However, it is different from the people of Tanjungbalai city who still maintain their traditions (Agus Firmansyah, Mohamad Mustari, Basariah, 2023). The city of Tanjungbalai still preserves the tradition of Menyonggot by continuing to carry out the tradition in every event. So that the values contained in the menyonggot tradition continue to be maintained and applied properly. However, sometimes the tradition is not fully carried out in the correct manner (in accordance with the traditions of the ancestors), so at this time the tradition of welcoming with a more modern model is formed, but still with the same meaning.

This tradition of welcoming has many values in religious and educational aspects. However, the focus of the research in this study is only to explore the values of education, namely the social values of the community such as mutual cooperation and friendship, and religious values, namely by praying together with the meaning of gratitude and keeping away from all disasters in the family and oneself. The reason why the author conducted research on educational and religious values in the menyonggot tradition is because this tradition is the only tradition that has many meanings for all forms of events and has many social and religious values in each of its implementations. The author's hope of conducting this research is to find out the social and religious values that are so much contained in the tradition of welcoming and to provide understanding to the younger generation so that they can continue to preserve and implement the ancestral culture of the city of Tanjungbalai.

## ***Method***

This study uses descriptive qualitative. This research was conducted in the city of Tanjungbalai on Anwar Idris Street, Datuk Bandar Tumor district. This research was conducted from September 2023 to February 2024. Data collection techniques are in the form of interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with one community leader in the city of Tanjungbalai and ordinary people. And then the data is described using reduction techniques, data presentation and verification (drawing conclusions).

## ***Findings and Discussion***

### ***1. Menyonggot Tradition***

Tanjungbalai is one of the cities in the province of North Sumatra which is located on the banks of the Asahan River, which has a variety of ethnic groups and languages. It is located on the east coast of Sumatra, an important port city and gateway to the Asahan area, which in the past was a trading route for Dutch colonizers. The people of Tanjungbalai City have a multicultural culture and consist of various ethnicities, cultures, races, and religions. Where the majority of tribes in the city of Tanjungbalai are Malays. In the Malay community on the East Coast of North Sumatra, especially in the city of Tanjungbalai, the activity of menjonggot is carried out as a traditional medicine activity and has become cultured, especially among the Malay community. The tradition of menyonggot is usually carried out by the Tanjungbalai Malays when an incident or accident occurs, seeing supernatural beings (demons) and is also carried out in a treatment event for a person suffering from a certain disease which is common for an

adult, has been taken for treatment to several people or doctors or to several hospitals, and traditional medicine, but does not want to recover completely.

The Songgot-Menyonggot tradition is a ceremony that is usually carried out by the residents of Tanjung Balai when an accident occurs or when they see a supernatural creature (demon). This ceremony is usually used for traditional medicine. According to the people of Tanjung Balai, the Songgot custom is also used to welcome fishermen who have been at sea for a month or more. This tradition is considered to be able to calm fishermen who are affected by disasters, such as waves, etc. (Hutagalung & Harahap, 2024). According to the people of Tanjungbalai, the songgot ceremony is carried out to welcome fishermen who have been looking for fish for a month or more. to boost the morale of fishermen due to accidents such as high sea waves, lightning, etc. The custom of songgot comes from the Batak language, which means surprise, but in the Malay community of Tanjung Balai, songgot means to reject reinforcements. Although this city consists of various ethnic groups, such as Batak Toba, Mandailing, Javanese, and others. Nevertheless, the Malay culture and tradition of Songgot is preserved and practiced by other tribes outside the Malays. When approaching, it is tried so that the person who is being bullied does not know that he will be bullied. By not being told in advance, the person who will be sued will be surprised and feel happy. Being happy because feeling cared for is what is expected to be medicine and encouragement.

Menyonggot usually uses bales/bales and plain flour. Bale will be lifted over the head of the person who is being sprayed and unsalted flour will be sprinkled or applied to the person who is being sprayed earlier. *"One, Two, Tido, Ompat, Limo, Six, Seven", "Lost in Pain, Lost in Spirit", "It's a good thing, don't argue with me"*. The sentence above is an example of a sentence that is often used by the people of Tanjungbalai When they say, while saying the sentence *"one, duo, tido, ompat, limo, onam, tujuuuuhhh"* the people of Tanjungbalai will lift the hall/bale to the top of the head of the ornga to be sunggot. After that, they gave details, sprinkled flowers and wrapped sarongs into the body that was twisted while giving prayers of kindness.



Figure 1: The Welcoming Process

Welcoming is carried out by the Tanjungbalai community on several occasions including, Marriage, Seven months of pregnancy/abdominal elongation, Birth/swinging, Circumcision and Khataman al-Quran. In addition, nowadays welcoming has also been carried out on occasions such as, Graduation, Success in duty, Going and returning to Hajj/Umrah and just recovered from illness.

Unsalted flour consists of at least two parts. The first part is the detailing and the second part is the unsalted flour material.

### a. Pericis

A granular is a group of leaves used to detail water or splash water. These leaves are made from various leaves including:

- Lemonade symbolizes cleanliness
- Cold leaves symbolize cooling
- Lenjuhang symbolizes hope
- Squirrels and Squirrels Are A Symbol of Age
- Pepulut symbolizes the adhesive of kindness
- The deer double symbolizes a deterrent / shield
- Full of success symbolizes success
- Sambau and its roots symbolize endurance, toughness and strength.

All the above leaves are gathered together in such a way. The leaves of many of these plants are arranged in layers to later be used as a refiner or sprinkler from unsalted flour.

### b. Unsalted flour ingredients

While the ingredients of unsalted flour and their meanings are:

- Bertih is roasted rice symbolizing development
- White rice that is usually mixed with turmeric symbolizes glory
- Rice flour symbolizes cleanliness, purity and sincerity
- Potpourri symbolizes cleanliness and fragrance
- Water symbolizes life

Menjonggot, balai/bale, and plain flour are one unit that cannot be separated. These three things make a unity of money to form a culture that is still inherent in the midst of the Tanjungbalai Society. Although the intentions in this welcoming activity will be diverse. However, we still have to preserve it and still uphold its cultural values. Today's young generation, especially students, must continue to preserve the culture of welcoming as one of the hereditary habits that have good values.



Figure 2 : Plain Flour/Rinjisan Water

## 2. Values in the Menyonggot Tradition

Based on the results of the interviews conducted, the values contained in the Menyonggot tradition are divided into two values, namely educational values and religious values where the educational values are:

### a. Educational Values in the Menyonggot Tradition

The educational value contained in the tradition of *welcoming* is reflected in the practice of friendship, which is the core of this activity. The implementation of the tradition is usually carried out at the residence of one of the family members or community members who will be desecrated, making the house a meeting point for relatives, neighbors, and other community members. Gathering in this context is not just a social visit, but a meaningful action in strengthening family relationships and building harmonious communication between individuals in the social environment.

In this tradition, gathering contains a deeper meaning as a manifestation of moral values and social ethics that are taught from generation to generation. Through direct interaction and the atmosphere of togetherness created, the community is invited to strengthen emotional ties, foster mutual respect, and increase a sense of empathy and concern for others. This becomes especially relevant in the context of character education, where individuals not only learn from theory, but also through real practice in everyday life.

In addition, the gathering that occurs in the *menyonggot* tradition also serves as a means of inheriting local cultural values to the younger generation. Children and adolescents who are directly involved in these activities will learn about the importance of maintaining social relationships, respecting older people, and understanding their role in strengthening social solidarity in their neighborhoods.

Thus, the value of friendship contained in the *tradition of welcoming* not only functions as a socio-cultural media, but also as a vehicle for informal education that is able to instill noble values in individuals from an early age. This tradition proves that local culture has great potential in supporting character formation and the development of social values in society.

Friendship is a form of grace and affection, which includes strengthening the bonds of brotherhood and kinship. Silaturahmi also means getting closer to others after previously being apart, as well as renewing communication that had been cut off with affection between them (Andi Warisno, 2017).

Gotong royong is one of the social activities carried out by a group of people and carried out together. So the tradition contains the value of mutual cooperation such as cooking together, preparing everything needed in the tradition.

However, according to (Roba & Rippi, 2024) Gotong royong is a manifestation of social solidarity that needs to be preserved and developed in daily life. The practice of mutual cooperation has become a characteristic and intangible cultural heritage of the Indonesian nation, reflecting the application of Pancasila values, especially the third precept, namely the Unity of Indonesia. Gotong royong is one of the typical Indonesian cultures that is rich in noble values, so it is very important to be preserved and maintained. Indonesia is known as a country with a diversity of cultures, religions, races, and traditions spread from Sabang to Merauke. One of the characteristics and national identity of the Indonesian nation is its culture. Culture is an activity or habit of life that is carried out and agreed upon by a group of people as a characteristic of a community group (Putri Widia Ningsih et al., 2023). Gotong royong is a form of cooperation in community groups that aims to achieve positive results through consensus and joint deliberation. Mutual cooperation must also be based on the spirit of sincerity, willingness, togetherness, tolerance, and trust. In short, gotong royong is more intrinsic, namely social interaction based on non-economic interests or rewards. (Annisia Valentina, Ratna Istiyani1, 2013).

So it can be concluded that the implementation of mutual cooperation is an activity in the form of social community that starts from the heart to help do something else and activities. And in this tradition

of welcoming has a high social value where we can stay in touch with our family and relatives by doing social activities such as mutual cooperation so that it makes us or our family solid and maintain closeness.

#### b. Religious values in the Menyonggot tradition

This tradition of joint prayer reflects the religious awareness of the people towards human dependence on divine forces in living life. In a solemn and solemn atmosphere, each individual is invited to reflect, ask for forgiveness, and hope that all intentions and goals based on goodness can be realized with God's permission. This is also a form of strengthening spiritual values that are internalized collectively in society.

In addition to functioning as a spiritual means, joint prayer in the *menjonggot* tradition also has a strong socio-religious dimension. This activity brings together various levels of society in one worship room, thus creating an atmosphere of togetherness based on common faith and hope. Through these interactions, solidarity between citizens can be built, and the spirit of brotherhood in the framework of religiosity is further strengthened.

Furthermore, the practice of joint prayer is also a learning vehicle for the younger generation to understand the importance of the relationship between humans and their God, as well as how religious values can be realized in daily social life. This tradition instills religious awareness from an early age, and forms a character based on the values of piety, sincerity, and hope.

Thus, religious values in the *menyonggot* tradition are not only a symbolic aspect, but an integral part of the community's belief system that functions in shaping individual spirituality while strengthening social harmony within the framework of local religious culture.

Joint prayer is the practice of praying collectively by Muslims and non-Muslims in official state events and community activities at the same time and location. This can be done in two forms: one or more individuals lead the prayer while the other agrees, or each individual prays according to their respective religion simultaneously (Bimasakti, 2019).

### Conclusion

Based on the results of the research, the *menyonggot* tradition is a form of local cultural heritage that has a strong attachment to the religious values of the community. This tradition is not just a ceremonial event, but also a spiritual expression that is loaded with religious meaning. This is reflected in the ritual of recitation of prayers carried out at each stage of the event, which serves as a form of request for the entire series of activities to obtain blessings and pleasure from God Almighty. The tradition of *menyonggot* also contains a very important educational dimension, especially in forming and instilling social values in community life. One of the main aspects of the social value instilled is the importance of maintaining friendship and building the spirit of mutual cooperation between citizens. In the context of its implementation, this tradition is a momentum for the gathering of extended family members, relatives, and the community who may not have seen each other for a long time, thus functioning as a medium to strengthen social and family relationships.

Joint activities carried out within the framework of this tradition, such as cooking together, preparing ceremonial utensils, and cleaning the environment, are another form of mutual cooperation practices that not only strengthen cooperation, but also deepen a sense of solidarity and social concern. Mutual cooperation in the *tradition of welcoming* is not only a symbol of unity, but also an important instrument in building sustainable social interest in the community. The tradition of *welcoming* not only has cultural and religious aesthetic value, but also becomes an educational vehicle that teaches about the



importance of harmonious social life, mutual help, and upholding human values within the framework of local culture.

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