

The Character Education Through *Sumang* Tradition in Gayonese Community

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ABSTRACT

Character education is an essential component of developing well-rounded individuals in society. This research aimed to explore the potential of the *Sumang* tradition in developing education character among the Gayonese community. The study applied a qualitative approach with an ethnographic case study method. Data were collected through interviews and documentation. The interviews were conducted to several informants, such as the Head of the Gayonese Customary Council, community leaders, and a number of teachers who were selected purposively. The interviews were conducted using open-ended questions to allow informants to express their opinions and experiences freely. To complement the data obtained from interviews, the research also conducted a process of tracing documents related to the *Sumang* tradition in the Gayonese community. Document tracing is a data collection technique that involves reviewing written or recorded materials related to the research topic. In this case, the researchers reviewed various documents, such as books, articles, and reports that discussed the *Sumang* tradition in the Gayonese community. The data analysis technique used in this research was an interactive analysis technique consisting of three main stages: data collection, data condensation, and conclusion drawing. The research findings reveal that character education through the *Sumang* tradition in the Gayonese community is achieved by instilling *Sumang* values among community members. The *Sumang* tradition comprises four stages, namely *Sumang Kenunulen*, *Sumang Percerakan*, *Sumang Pelangkahan*, and *Sumang Penengonen*, each of which emphasizes different values.

Key words: Character Education, Sumang, Gayonese

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan karakter merupakan komponen penting dalam mengembangkan individu yang berkepribadian baik dalam masyarakat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi potensi tradisi Sumang dalam pengembangan pendidikan karakter di kalangan masyarakat Gayo. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus etnografis. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dan dokumentasi. Wawancara dilakukan kepada beberapa informan, seperti Kepala Dewan Adat Gayo, pemimpin masyarakat, dan sejumlah guru yang dipilih secara purposif. Wawancara dilakukan dengan pertanyaan terbuka untuk memungkinkan informan mengungkapkan pendapat dan pengalaman mereka secara bebas. Selain wawancara, penelitian ini juga melakukan penelusuran dokumen terkait tradisi Sumang di masyarakat Gayo. Penelusuran dokumen merupakan teknik pengumpulan data yang melibatkan tinjauan terhadap materi tertulis atau direkam yang berkaitan dengan topik penelitian. Analisis data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah teknik analisis interaktif yang terdiri dari tiga tahap utama: pengumpulan data, kondensasi data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan karakter melalui tradisi Sumang di masyarakat Gayo tercapai dengan menanamkan nilai-nilai Sumang di kalangan anggota masyarakat. Tradisi Sumang terdiri dari empat tahap, yaitu *Sumang Kenunulen*, *Sumang Percerakan*, *Sumang Pelangkahan*, dan *Sumang Penengonen*, masing-masing menekankan pada nilai-nilai yang berbeda.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Karakter, Sumang, Masyarakat Gayo

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1. INTRODUCTION

The *Sumang* tradition is a cultural practice that has been passed down from generation to generation among the Gayonese community in Aceh, Indonesia (Bakti, 2020). The *Sumang* tradition is a set of rules that govern the Gayonese community, often in the form of taboos or prohibitions (Jaya & Daud, 2017). These rules are intended to promote responsible behavior and instill noble values in maintaining the Gayonese community's order. The *Sumang* tradition is deeply rooted in the Gayonese culture and serves as an important symbol of community identity and unity (Zulkarnain et al., 2019).

Character education is an essential aspect of developing well-rounded individuals in society (Marshall et al., 2017). It aims to instill positive values, attitudes, and behaviors that are necessary for personal and social development (Nurtanto et al., 2020). The *Sumang* tradition's emphasis on responsibility, respect, unity, and diligence aligns with character education's objectives, making it a promising resource for promoting positive character development among individuals in the Gayonese community (Syukri, 2023). Preserving local wisdom values such as the *Sumang* tradition is critical for maintaining cultural diversity and promoting intergenerational learning. Therefore, this research aims to explore the potential of the *Sumang* tradition in developing education character among the Gayonese community. By identifying the values and practices that underpin the *Sumang* tradition, this research seeks to provide insights into how local wisdom can be utilized to promote character education in schools and other educational institutions.

Several previous studies have explored the *Sumang* tradition's cultural and historical significance in the Gayonese community. For instance, a study conducted by Zulkarnain et al. (2019) examined the role of the *Sumang* tradition in sustaining the Gayonese culture. The researchers found that the *Sumang* tradition played a crucial role in passing down cultural values and maintaining social order among the Gayonese people. Another study conducted by Jaya & Daud (2017) explored the *Sumang* tradition's symbolism and meaning in the Gayonese community. The researchers found that the *Sumang* tradition was deeply rooted in Gayonese culture and served as an essential symbol of community identity and unity. Similarly, a study conducted by Suhartini & Surya (2022) analyzed the cultural and spiritual aspects of the *Sumang* tradition in the Gayonese community. The researchers found that the *Sumang* tradition's spiritual significance promotes emotional well-being and fosters a sense of belonging among community members. Overall, these previous studies provide valuable insights into the *Sumang* tradition's cultural and historical significance in the Gayonese community. However, few studies have investigated the *Sumang* tradition's potential role in developing education character among individuals. Therefore, this research aims to contribute to the existing literature by exploring the *Sumang* tradition's potential as a resource for character education in the Gayonese community.

In summary, this research aims to explore the potential of the *Sumang* tradition in developing education character among the Gayonese community. By identifying the values and practices that underpin this cultural practice, this research seeks to promote the preservation of local wisdom and contribute to the development of character education initiatives in the Gayonese community and beyond.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Character Education

Character education is an essential aspect of personal and social development that has been defined in various ways by scholars, educators, and policymakers (Lavy, 2020). The Josephson Institute for Ethics defines character education as "the deliberate effort to develop virtues that are good for the individual and society" (Singh, 2019). This definition suggests that character education aims to instill positive values, attitudes, and behaviors that promote both individual well-being and societal good (Rimm et al., 2018). It highlights the importance of developing ethical and moral standards that are beneficial to not only the individual but also the community (Göransson & Nilholm, 2014).

The Character Education Partnership (CEP) defines character education as "a continuous learning process that enables young people and adults to become moral, caring, critical, responsible individuals" (Berkowitz et al., 2020). This definition emphasizes the ongoing nature of character education, recognizing that it is a lifelong process that requires consistent attention and effort. Furthermore, it acknowledges that character

education is relevant to all individuals, regardless of age or developmental stage (Stewart-Burrison, 2014). The use of the word "continuous" emphasizes that character education is not limited to a particular period or stage of life but should be valued throughout one's lifespan (Fink & Geller, 2016).

Another definition of character education comes from the National School Safety Center (NSSC), which describes it as "the deliberate effort to help students understand, care about, and act on core ethical values" (Karaburk, 2017). This definition underscores the intentional nature of character education, highlighting the need for targeted efforts to shape students' understanding of ethical and moral values (Elbes & Oktaviani, 2022). Moreover, it recognizes that character education is not just about knowledge acquisition but about promoting positive behavior and attitudes towards core ethical values (Walker et al., 2015). The above definitions highlight the multifaceted nature of character education and affirm its importance in personal and social development. They recognize that character education is more than just knowledge acquisition; it is an intentional and ongoing process that aims to instill desirable qualities and values in individuals. Additionally, they acknowledge that character development is beneficial not only to the individual but also to society at large. By promoting positive values, attitudes, and behaviors, character education can contribute to the betterment of society, ensuring a more harmonious and respectful community.

In conclusion, character education is a vital component of personal and social development that has been defined in various ways by scholars, educators, and policymakers. The definitions provided by the Josephson Institute for Ethics, the Character Education Partnership, and the National School Safety Center emphasize the intentional and ongoing nature of character education and its relevance for individuals of all ages. They also recognize that character development is essential for both individual and societal well-being. By instilling positive values, attitudes, and behaviors, character education can contribute to creating a more ethical and moral society.

2. 2 The Urgency of Character Education

The urgency of character education is a result of the significant challenges facing modern society (Abdi, 2018). There has been an increasing concern over declining ethical and moral standards among individuals in recent decades (Rokhman et al., 2014). This decline is evident in behaviors such as aggression, bullying, substance abuse, and other negative practices that are rampant among students (Abdullah et al., 2019). These concerning trends have raised alarm bells among educators, parents, and policymakers, who have been grappling with how best to address them (Chowdhury, 2018). Traditional disciplinary measures have been ineffective in curbing these negative behaviors, prompting a more proactive approach to the issue (Almerico, 2014). Character education has emerged as a response to these pressing issues, aiming to instill positive values, attitudes, and behaviors in individuals (Campbell, 2014). Instead of punishing undesirable behavior, character education seeks to prevent it from occurring in the first place by equipping individuals with essential personal and social qualities that promote positive behavior (Diana et al., 2021).

Character education is not just about teaching students what is right or wrong (Saputro & Murdiono, 2020). It is about providing them with opportunities to develop positive character traits such as respect, responsibility, empathy, honesty, perseverance, self-discipline, and citizenship (Retnawati et al., 2018). These qualities enable individuals to make sound decisions, act ethically, and lead fulfilling lives. They also equip individuals with the skills to navigate complex social relationships, resolve conflicts peacefully, and contribute positively to society. The urgency of character education is further compounded by the fact that we live in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world (Mahmud & Manda, 2016). Individuals are exposed to different cultures, beliefs, and values, making it imperative to develop the ability to appreciate and respect differences (Fathinnaufal & Hidayati, 2020). Character education promotes diversity and inclusion, enabling individuals to understand and celebrate differences while fostering unity and harmony (Angraini & Kusniarti, 2016).

The character education is essential for addressing the challenges facing modern society (Istiyono et al., 2021). The urgency of character education stems from the need to promote positive behavior, reduce negative behaviors, and equip individuals with the necessary personal and social qualities to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives (Isroani & Huda, 2022). The approach offered by character education is proactive, preventative, and inclusive, promoting diversity and harmony in society (Andayani et al., 2020). By investing in character education, we can create a better tomorrow for ourselves, our families, and our communities. Research has shown that character education initiatives can lead to positive outcomes such as improved academic achievement, reduced absenteeism and disciplinary referrals, and increased social and emotional competence among students (Suherman et al., 2019). Therefore, the urgency of character education lies in its potential to promote positive behavior, reduce negative behaviors, and equip students with essential personal and social qualities necessary for leading a meaningful and fulfilling life.

2. 3 Implementation of Character Education

Implementing character education requires a comprehensive and holistic approach that involves all stakeholders, including educators, parents, and community members (Sulistyarini et al., 2019). This comprehensive approach is necessary to ensure that students receive consistent messages about desirable behavior

and promote positive values, attitudes, and behaviors effectively (Satria & Shahbana, 2020). Character education should be integrated into all aspects of the school curriculum and extracurricular activities (Nurafiati et al., 2021). This integration ensures that students are exposed to character development opportunities in all their learning spaces, thus reinforcing consistent messaging on desirable behavior (Maisyaroh et al., 2023). It also provides students with multiple opportunities to practice and apply character qualities such as respect, responsibility, empathy, honesty, perseverance, self-discipline, and citizenship (Zaenab et al., 2020).

Character education programs must be age-appropriate and tailored to the specific needs of students (Dasmana et al., 2022). Students at different developmental stages have unique experiences, cultural backgrounds, learning needs, and social-emotional competencies (Susatya et al., 2021). Therefore, age-appropriate and tailored programs allow for optimal acquisition of personal and social qualities based on developmental levels. For instance, younger students may require more structured lessons explicitly teaching character traits, while older students may require more interactive activities that challenge their critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Badrin et al., 2022). Additionally, considering cultural backgrounds when developing character education programs is vital to ensure that they are inclusive and relevant to diverse populations (Subekti & Alinurdin, 2021). Culturally responsive character education programs recognize and respect different cultural practices, norms, and beliefs (Putra et al., 2021). They also provide opportunities for students to learn from different cultures and perspectives, promoting diversity and inclusion (Rohman & Mentari, 2024).

Character education should also involve parents and community members (Andayani et al., 2020). Parents and caregivers play a critical role in shaping their children's values, attitudes, and behaviors (Sahabuddin et al., 2022). Including them in character education initiatives enables them to reinforce the same messages at home, thus providing a consistent approach to character development (Subaidi, 2020). Furthermore, community members can serve as role models and mentors for students, sharing their expertise, experiences, and insights with learners (Rahman et al., 2021). The implementing character education requires a comprehensive and holistic approach that involves educators, parents, and community members (Anisah, 2023). Integrating character education into all aspects of the school curriculum and extracurricular activities, tailoring it to the specific needs of students, considering cultural backgrounds, and involving parents and community members are essential steps towards effective character development (Veronika & Dafit, 2022). By adopting such an approach, we can equip students with the necessary personal and social qualities to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives while contributing positively to society.

2. 4 The Character Education and Local Wisdom

Character Education and Local Wisdom are two concepts that share a common goal of developing positive values, attitudes, and behaviors in individuals. Character education aims to promote desirable qualities such as respect, responsibility, empathy, honesty, perseverance, self-discipline, and citizenship, among others (Marhayani, 2016). On the other hand, local wisdom refers to the collective knowledge, practices, beliefs, and values of a particular community or culture (Hidayati et al., 2020). The integration of character education and local wisdom creates an opportunity to promote positive values while preserving cultural heritage (Marhayani, 2016). Local wisdom provides a rich source of knowledge, ideas, and practices that can be used to develop character education programs (Sugiyo & Purwastuti, 2017). By incorporating traditional values and beliefs into character education programs, we can ensure that they are relevant and meaningful to learners (Hasanah et al., 2016). For instance, local wisdom may emphasize the importance of respect for elders, which is an essential value in many cultures (Ernawati et al., 2018). Incorporating this value in character education programs can help instill respectful behavior in students towards their teachers, parents, and older community members (Hidayati et al., 2020). Similarly, local wisdom may place a significant emphasis on community service. Incorporating this value in character education programs can help instill a sense of responsibility in students to contribute positively to society (Suhartini et al., 2019).

Moreover, integrating character education and local wisdom promotes diversity and tolerance (Parhan & Dwiputra, 2023). Local wisdom recognizes and respects different cultural practices, norms, and beliefs, while character education promotes inclusion and respect for diversity (Tohri et al., 2022). The combination of these two concepts encourages students to appreciate and celebrate cultural differences, fostering unity and harmony in society (Mu'min, 2023). However, integrating character education and local wisdom requires careful consideration of contextual factors. Not all cultural practices and beliefs may align with desirable values promoted through character education. Therefore, it is important to critically evaluate cultural practices and beliefs before incorporating them into character education programs. The character education and local wisdom are complementary concepts that can work together to promote positive values, attitudes, and behaviors in individuals while preserving cultural heritage. Integrating local wisdom in character education programs can provide a rich source of knowledge, ideas, and practices that are relevant and meaningful to learners. Furthermore, this integration promotes diversity, tolerance, and inclusion, fostering unity and harmony in society. Nevertheless, contextual factors should be carefully evaluated before incorporating cultural practices into character education programs.

3. METHOD

The research used a qualitative approach with an ethnographic case study method (Harwati, 2019). The research aimed to explore the role of the *Sumang* tradition in character education within the Gayonese community. In general, the collecting data used two primary methods for data collection: interviews and documentation. (Fusch et al., 2017) Purposive sampling was used to select informants, which included individuals who were considered knowledgeable and experienced in the *Sumang* tradition and character education within the Gayonese community. This sampling technique allowed the researchers to select participants who could provide rich and relevant data related to the research topic (Dobbins et al., 2021). Interviews were conducted with the selected informants using open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are questions that do not have a specific answer and allow the informants to express their experiences and opinions freely. This approach encouraged informants to share their perspectives on the *Sumang* tradition and its role in character education within the Gayonese community. Open-ended questions also provided the opportunity for the researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the informants' experiences and attitudes towards character education and the *Sumang* tradition. The interview data collected added a qualitative dimension to the research as it provided insights into the subjective experiences of the informants.

In addition to interviews, the research also utilized documentation as a method for data collection. Document tracing is a data collection technique that involves reviewing written or recorded materials related to the research topic. In this case, various documents such as books, articles, and reports discussing the *Sumang* tradition in the Gayonese community were reviewed. This approach allowed the researchers to collect data from diverse sources and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the *Sumang* tradition and its role in character education. Overall, the combination of purposive sampling, open-ended questions, and document tracing allowed the researchers to gather rich and diverse data related to the *Sumang* tradition's role in character education within the Gayonese community.

The data obtained in this research were then analyzed using an interactive analysis technique consisting of three key stages. The first stage was data collection where the collected data was organized systematically for further analysis. The next stage was data condensation, where the researchers condensed the information gathered from the interviews and document tracing into themes and categories related to character education through the *Sumang* tradition. During the data condensation stage, the researchers identified patterns and commonalities in the data collected. They categorized the data according to the research question, which was to explore the role of *Sumang* tradition in character education within the Gayonese community. The researchers highlighted significant points and interpreted the data to identify emerging themes. The final stage was conclusion drawing, where the researchers integrated their findings to answer the research question. By analyzing the data at a deeper level, the researchers drew conclusions on the role of the *Sumang* tradition in character education in the Gayonese community. They were also able to provide recommendations on how the *Sumang* tradition could be used more effectively in character education programs. Using an interactive analysis technique allowed the researchers to undertake a systematic and rigorous analysis of the collected data. It ensured that the findings were grounded in the data collected, and the conclusions drawn were well-supported by evidence. This approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of how the *Sumang* tradition contributes to character education within the Gayonese community.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

Based on the data obtained, the following findings can be identified regarding the education character through the *Sumang* tradition in Gayonese community. It is a tradition that has been inherited for generations in the culture of the Gayo community. This tradition is a heritage that originated from formal rules within the Gayo society, known as the *Edet* of the Linge kingdom, which has existed since 1153 AD. This is in line with what the informant stated as follows:

"In general, the rules that still exist and bind the culture of the highlands Gayo society are sourced from the major rules that existed when the Linge kingdom was in power. These major rules in the Gayo society are known as the *Edet* of the Linge Kingdom consisting of 45 Articles which regulate all aspects of Gayo society's life."

As a tradition that developed within the community, the *Sumang* plays a significant role in instilling noble values that are taught informally to the community. Noble values are taught and practiced at the smallest level such as families, as well as on a larger scale within society through advice delivered during traditional events. This is as stated by the following informant:

"*Sumang* is a cultivation of good values to guide the community towards a better way of life. These values are usually taught and instilled by families to their children through commands and prohibitions that should not be done. These values are also typically conveyed in traditional speeches known as *melenkan*."

The cultivation of noble values in the Gayo community has been developing exceptionally well through the transmission of these values from generation to generation, both within the family environment and in society at large. This is in line with what the following informant conveyed.

"As a member of the Gayonese community, I have been exposed to the Sumang tradition from a young age. It has been a significant part of my upbringing and has played an important role in shaping my values and principles. Through the Sumang tradition, I have learned the importance of respecting elders, maintaining harmony within the community, and upholding moral standards. Overall, I believe that the Sumang tradition has contributed greatly to character education within the Gayonese community."

One of the prominent values in character education through the Sumang tradition in the Gayo community is the cultivation of respect for elders. The younger generations are taught to behave kindly and respectfully towards older individuals. This etiquette governs interactions, including verbal communication, gestures, and more. One informant expressed the following sentiment regarding this matter.

"An example of how the Sumang tradition has shaped my personal values is through the emphasis on respect for elders and authority figures. Growing up in the Gayonese community, I was taught to show deference towards those who were older or in positions of leadership. This value has become an integral part of my own moral code and has guided me in my interactions with others. The Sumang tradition has also taught me the importance of maintaining harmony within the community and resolving conflicts through peaceful means. These values have helped shape my personal principles and have influenced the way I approach relationships and social interactions."

In a broader context, the Sumang tradition has strong roots in strengthening character values within the Gayo community. This can be observed through the distinct characteristics of the Gayo society, which is deeply imbued with values and norms in daily life. This sentiment was expressed by the following informant.

"I believe that the Sumang tradition contributes significantly to character education within the Gayonese community by instilling important values and principles in individuals from a young age. The Sumang tradition emphasizes the importance of respect, harmony, and moral standards, which are essential qualities for developing good character. Through the Sumang tradition, individuals learn to value cultural heritage, respect authority figures, and uphold social norms. Moreover, the Sumang tradition promotes community building and encourages collective responsibility towards maintaining the well-being of the community. Overall, I think the Sumang tradition serves as an effective means of character education in the Gayonese community."

As a community living in the highlands, the Gayo society has distinct traditions that set them apart from other majority communities in Aceh. This also makes them sensitive to efforts aimed at preserving their cultural identity. Among these cultural aspects, the most prominent is seen in the Sumang tradition as part of character education within the community. This sentiment was expressed by the following informant.

"The Sumang tradition encourages individuals to work together towards common goals and to prioritize collective well-being over individual interests. This value fosters a sense of community building and helps maintain peace within the community. Moral standards: The Sumang tradition promotes a set of moral standards grounded in the Gayonese cultural heritage. These standards serve as a guide for behavior and decision-making, and help individuals develop strong ethical principles. Cultural identity: The Sumang tradition reinforces the importance of preserving and celebrating Gayonese cultural identity. This value instills a sense of pride in one's cultural heritage and helps individuals develop a sense of belonging within the community. Overall, the values and principles taught through the Sumang tradition are critical for promoting good character and social cohesion within the Gayonese community."

4. 2 Discussions

The *Sumang* tradition holds immense significance in shaping the education character within the Gayonese community. It is not merely a cultural practice but serves as a comprehensive educational framework that encompasses various aspects of learning and character development (Hermino & Arifin, 2020). In this discussion, we will explore and delve into the different facets of the *Sumang* tradition and its profound contributions to education and character development in individuals within the Gayonese community. Firstly, the *Sumang* tradition is deeply rooted in the Gayonese culture and serves as a cornerstone for imparting essential knowledge, values, and skills to the younger generation. It provides a structured and purposeful approach to education, focusing on not only academic learning but also social, moral, and emotional growth. By participating in the *Sumang* tradition, individuals are exposed to a wide range of experiences that contribute to their overall education and character development (Fajarini, 2014). The *Sumang* tradition plays a vital role in instilling

important values and virtues in individuals within the Gayonese community. It places a strong emphasis on cultivating qualities such as respect, humility, discipline, and perseverance. Through active engagement in the *Sumang* activities, individuals learn the value of respect for their elders, cooperation with others, and the importance of maintaining harmony within their community. These values form the foundation of a strong character and are highly valued and celebrated within the Gayonese society. Moreover, the *Sumang* tradition fosters a sense of community engagement and social cohesion. It acts as a unifying force, bringing together people from diverse backgrounds and age groups to participate in communal activities. This collective participation creates an environment conducive to learning, sharing experiences, and nurturing positive relationships. The sense of belonging and togetherness fostered by the *Sumang* tradition strengthens the social fabric of the Gayonese community and promotes a collective responsibility for education and character development.

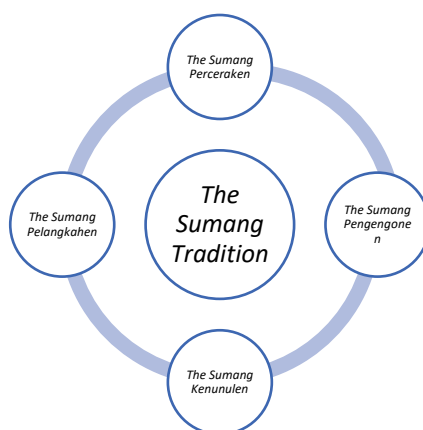


Figure 1. The division of *Sumang* within the Gayo society

Another significant aspect of the *Sumang* tradition is its intergenerational nature (Kartika, 2016). It facilitates the transfer of knowledge, wisdom, and cultural insights from older generations to the younger ones. The elders play a pivotal role in passing down their experiences, skills, and values, ensuring the continuity of Gayonese traditions and the preservation of cultural heritage. This intergenerational learning not only transmits knowledge but also strengthens the bonds between different age groups within the community. Furthermore, the *Sumang* tradition plays a crucial role in helping individuals develop a strong sense of cultural identity. By actively engaging in cultural practices and traditions, individuals gain a deeper understanding of their roots and heritage. They learn about the history, customs, and beliefs that define the Gayonese community. This knowledge strengthens their cultural pride and identity, enabling them to embrace and celebrate their Gayonese heritage with confidence and enthusiasm.

The Gayonese community deeply values the preservation of their cultural heritage, and the *Sumang* tradition serves as a powerful means to achieve this objective. The *Sumang* tradition provides a platform for the younger generation to immerse themselves in their roots, traditions, and customs. It acts as a conduit for the transmission of valuable knowledge and wisdom from one generation to another, ensuring the continuity and preservation of Gayonese culture (Hidayati et al., 2020). One essential aspect that makes the *Sumang* tradition significant is its holistic approach to education. Unlike traditional academic learning alone, the *Sumang* tradition encompasses various dimensions such as social, moral, and emotional aspects of education. This comprehensive approach aims to provide a well-rounded educational experience for individuals within the Gayonese community.

By incorporating music, dance, storytelling, and other cultural practices, the *Sumang* tradition engages individuals in a diverse range of activities that go beyond textbook-based learning. This multifaceted approach allows individuals to develop a wide array of skills, including artistic expression, teamwork, and critical thinking. Moreover, it fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation for their own culture and heritage. Through the *Sumang* tradition, individuals are exposed to the richness of Gayonese cultural expressions. They learn traditional songs and dances, participate in storytelling sessions that convey ancestral narratives, and engage in hands-on experiences related to Gayonese crafts and arts. These activities not only provide avenues for self-expression but also serve as channels for transmitting cultural values, norms, and beliefs.

Furthermore, the *Sumang* tradition nurtures social skills and promotes community bonding. By engaging in group activities and collaborative performances, individuals learn the importance of cooperation, teamwork, and mutual respect. They develop a sense of belonging within the Gayonese community, fostering a supportive and inclusive social environment. The *Sumang* tradition also plays a vital role in character development by instilling moral values and virtues. Through the stories shared during *Sumang* gatherings, individuals learn about ethical principles, codes of conduct, and the importance of integrity and compassion. These moral lessons are integrated into everyday life, guiding individuals to make responsible choices and contribute positively to society.

Moreover, the *Sumang* tradition nurtures emotional intelligence by providing a space for individuals to express and explore their emotions. Whether through music, dance, or storytelling, the *Sumang* tradition encourages individuals to connect with their own feelings and develop empathy towards others. This emotional engagement fosters a deeper understanding of oneself and others, promoting emotional well-being and healthier social relationships.

Character-building is indeed a crucial aspect of the *Sumang* tradition within the Gayonese community. The *Sumang* tradition serves as a platform for instilling important values that shape individuals' character and contribute to their personal growth. Respect is a fundamental value emphasized in the *Sumang* tradition. Through active participation, individuals learn to respect their elders, cultural customs, and the wisdom passed down from previous generations. Respect for others and oneself is deeply ingrained in the Gayonese society, and the *Sumang* tradition reinforces this value by promoting respectful behavior and interactions. Humility is another key value fostered through the *Sumang* tradition. By engaging in cultural practices and learning from their elders, individuals develop a sense of humility and recognize the importance of being humble in their actions and interactions. Humility allows individuals to be open-minded, receptive to different perspectives, and willing to learn from others, fostering personal growth and harmonious relationships.

Discipline is also cultivated through active participation in the *Sumang* tradition. The dedication and commitment required to learn traditional songs, dances, and storytelling demonstrate the value of discipline. Individuals learn the importance of practice, perseverance, and self-control, which are essential qualities for success not only in the *Sumang* tradition but also in various aspects of life. The *Sumang* tradition also emphasizes the significance of teamwork, cooperation, and harmony within the community. Participating in group performances and collaborative activities fosters a sense of unity and collective responsibility. Individuals learn to work together towards a common goal, respecting each other's contributions and ensuring that everyone's efforts are valued. This sense of teamwork and cooperation extends beyond the *Sumang* tradition and becomes an integral part of individuals' character in their everyday lives.

Additionally, the *Sumang* tradition promotes the pursuit of harmony both within oneself and in interactions with others. By actively engaging in the cultural practices and values upheld by the *Sumang* tradition, individuals develop a deep understanding of how their actions can affect the community as a whole. They learn to recognize the interconnectedness of their choices and behaviors and strive to maintain harmony in all aspects of their lives. Within the Gayonese community, the *Sumang* tradition places great importance on resolving conflicts peacefully. Individuals are encouraged to seek understanding, empathy, and compromise when faced with disagreements or disputes. Through the *Sumang* tradition, they learn effective communication skills and conflict resolution strategies that promote harmonious relationships and the preservation of unity within the community. Inclusivity is another key aspect emphasized by the *Sumang* tradition. Participants are taught to embrace diversity and appreciate the contributions of every individual within the community. Through exposure to different cultural perspectives and experiences, individuals gain a broader understanding of the world around them. This understanding fosters inclusivity, acceptance, and respect for others, creating an atmosphere of harmony and unity within the Gayonese community.

Furthermore, the *Sumang* tradition encourages individuals to foster positive relationships with others. By participating in communal activities and collaborative endeavors, individuals learn the value of cooperation, teamwork, and mutual support. These experiences cultivate a sense of camaraderie and strengthen social bonds, leading to a more harmonious and supportive community environment. The lessons learned from the *Sumang* tradition extend beyond the cultural realm and have a profound impact on individuals' overall well-being. The emphasis on seeking harmony within oneself nurtures self-reflection and personal growth. Individuals are encouraged to align their thoughts, actions, and values, leading to a sense of inner peace and contentment.

The values instilled through the *Sumang* tradition contribute to the development of strong character traits that are highly regarded in the Gayonese society. Individuals who embody respect, humility, discipline, perseverance, teamwork, cooperation, and harmony are seen as role models within the community. These character traits form the foundation for individuals to lead productive, ethical, and meaningful lives, not only benefiting themselves but also contributing positively to the well-being of the Gayonese community as a whole.

Intergenerational learning is a key feature of the *Sumang* tradition. It facilitates the transfer of knowledge and wisdom between older and younger members of the community. Elders play a crucial role in passing down their experiences, skills, and cultural insights to the younger generation. This practice ensures the continuity of Gayonese traditions and values while bridging the generation gap. Moreover, the *Sumang* tradition plays a significant role in helping individuals develop a strong sense of cultural identity. By actively engaging in cultural practices and traditions, individuals gain a deeper understanding of their roots and heritage. This knowledge strengthens their cultural pride and identity, enabling them to embrace and celebrate their Gayonese heritage. To further enrich the discussion, it is important to incorporate Thomas Lickona's theory of character education. Lickona emphasizes the development of moral and ethical values to promote positive character development. The *Sumang* tradition aligns with Lickona's theory by promoting core ethical values such as respect, responsibility,

honesty, and compassion. It also cultivates moral identity through active participation and exposure to moral exemplars within the Gayonese community.

5. CONCLUSION

Sumang is part of the cultural tradition in society that has existed alongside the development of the Linge kingdom in the Gayo highlands. In practice, the *Sumang* tradition consists of what is known as *Sumang Perceraken*, which is related to etiquette in communication, *Sumang Pengengonen*, which pertains to etiquette in viewing things, *Sumang Kenunulen*, which relates to sitting manners, and *Sumang Pelangkahen*, which is associated with etiquette in traveling. In the context of character education, this *Sumang* tradition becomes one of the local wisdoms that can be preserved and utilized to educate characters, especially those related to social relationships in society. This research is expected to serve as a reference for schools and other stakeholders in developing character education based on local wisdom, especially in the Gayo highlands region. The study was conducted with a number of informants located in Central Aceh; therefore, further research taking a broader locus is deemed necessary.

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