



## The Philosophy of Life of The Alor Regency Community: A Literature Analysis of Cultural Values in Early Childhood Care Practices

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### Article Info

### Abstract

#### Keywords:

*Alor people's philosophy of life;*

*Child character building;*

*Local cultural values..*

Cultural identity plays an important role as a binding element of society as well as the basis for character building of the next generation. This research aims to explore the Alorese philosophy of life and its contribution to parenting and character building. A qualitative approach was used with literature analysis, involving data sources such as government reports, journals, books and articles relevant in the last 10-15 years. Data were analyzed through a process of coding, classification, and thematization. The results revealed the values of 'Ite Kakang Aring' (we are all brothers and sisters) and 'Tara Miti Tomi Nuku' (different but one) as the foundation of brotherhood, tolerance, and social harmony manifested through traditions such as the Lego-Lego dance and the kinship system. The implication is that cross-sector collaboration is needed to integrate these cultural values into formal, non-formal and family education programs in order to form a generation of characters who respect diversity.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Alor Regency is one of 21 regencies in East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. Located at the eastern end of the province, it consists of a cluster of 15 islands that form a unique geographical unit. Of these, nine islands are inhabited, including three large islands, namely Alor, Pantar, and Pura Islands, and six small islands such as Tereweng, Kepa, Buaya, Ternate, Kura, and Kangge (Alelang, 2018). Based on the 2020 Population Census, the population of Alor Regency reached 211,872 people spread across 17 sub-districts and 175 villages. Alor Regency is one of the 21 regencies in East Nusa Tenggara province, Indonesia. Located at the eastern end of the province, Alor Regency consists of a cluster of 15 islands that form a unique geographical unity. Of these, nine islands are inhabited, including three large islands, namely the Alor, Pantar, and Pura Islands, as well as six small islands such as Tereweng, Kepa, Buaya, Ternate, Kura, and Kangge (Alelang, 2018). Based on the 2020 population census, the population of Alor Regency reached 211,872 people spread across 17 sub-districts and 175 villages.

As an archipelago, the character of the people of Alor is influenced by the close interaction with nature and the surrounding environment. These interactions form a strong and rich cultural tradition. This tradition is reflected in the local wisdom that is passed down from generation to generation from ancestors and continues to guide people's lives today (Rosada et al., 2019; Plaimo et al., 2020; Wolf, 2021). The uniqueness of this area is also reflected in the way its people adapt to the challenging geographical environment, different from people in other regions in Indonesia (Gomang, 1993).

Parenting in Alor society is influenced by cultural values and a distinctive philosophy of life. The two main philosophies that are the foundation of parenting are ite Kakang Aring (we are all brothers) and Tara Miti Tomi

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Nuku (different but still one). These values teach the importance of solidarity, togetherness and tolerance in community life (Katubi, 2020; Smiley & Febriany, 2022; Djobo, 2022). This philosophy-based parenting pattern creates a more harmonious foster atmosphere, where children are taught to coexist peacefully with their families, communities, and surrounding environments. In addition to philosophical values, parenting practices in Alor are also influenced by indigenous traditions. One example is the Lego-lego dance which serves as a medium for strengthening the value of togetherness and unity. This dance is commonly performed in traditional events, weddings, and other social rituals, which indirectly reinforces the values of togetherness-based parenting in families and communities (Sunarti et al., 2019; Iswanto, 2020). Thus, Alor society parenting teaches children to internalize social values based on togetherness, harmony, and unity from an early age, a concept that distinguishes Alor society parenting from parenting in other communities.

Although the traditional values and philosophy of life of the people of Alor have been recognized as an integral part of the cultural landscape of the region, there are major challenges in maintaining these values. The current modernization and globalization has resulted in the erosion of traditional values in parenting. Various previous studies have shown that tradition-based parenting in Alor is able to shape the moral character of children (Djobo, 2022; Berimau & Febriany, 2022). However, the documentation and assessment of the philosophical values of the Alor people in the context of early childhood care is still very limited. This leads to a lack of guidance that can be used by formal and non-formal educational institutions in integrating these values into educational programs.

In addition, cases of violence against children in the East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) region are quite high. A Save the Children report in 2016 showed that 93% of violence against children in NTT occurred within families. In 2023, data from DP3A of NTT province recorded about 3,000 cases of physical and psychological violence against children. This condition is often associated with the perception that the local culture in NTT, including Alor, tends to be "harsh." In fact, the violence is most likely caused by past trauma or socio-economic stress (Shin et al., 2022; Lubis, 2023), is not part of the original cultural values of Alor. Therefore, it is important to explore and reaffirm the values of Positive Parenting in the philosophy of life of the Alor people in order to remove the negative stigma.

Previous studies have discussed Alor's local wisdom and parenting patterns based on cultural values (Rosada et al., 2019; Plaimo et al., 2020; Wolf, 2021). However, most of these studies focused on the recognition of common values and did not specifically examine early childhood care. Several studies have also highlighted the importance of integrating local cultural values into parenting (Sunarti et al., 2019; Lenama, 2024). However, these studies have not explored in depth how Alor's philosophy of life, such as *ite Kakang Aring*, *Tara Miti Tomi Nuku*, and *Lego-lego* dance are practically applied in early childhood care.

The novelty of this study lies in a comprehensive analysis of the application of Alor's philosophical values in early childhood parenting. This research not only documents the philosophy of parenting but also offers a practical approach to integrating those values into formal and nonformal education programs. In addition, this study seeks to bridge the gap in the literature on parenting based on Alor cultural values, which has been explored minimally. The purpose of this study was to identify the philosophical values of the Alor people that are relevant in early childhood care. This study also aims to analyze the application of these values in early childhood parenting. In addition, this study seeks to provide strategic recommendations to integrate the philosophical values of Alor community parenting into formal and non-formal education programs. With the achievement of these objectives, it is expected that this study can make an important contribution to the preservation of local culture and strengthening the values of culture-based parenting. This research is also expected to be a reference for policy makers, educational institutions, and early childhood care practitioners in designing policies and family education programs based on local culture. Thus, this study is not only relevant academically but also has a real impact in addressing the problems of child care in Alor Regency and the NTT region in general.

## 2. METHODS

### *Design*

The methodology used in this literature review is a qualitative approach, which aims to explore the values of Alor's philosophy of life and its contribution to parenting (Creswell, 2002). The source selection process included relevant articles, journals, books and government reports, with a focus on publications within the last ten years to ensure currency and relevance of the data. Data searches were conducted through academic databases such as Google Scholar and JSTOR, as well as university proceedings using keywords such as "cultural values," "parenting in Alor," and "Alor cultural traditions" to ensure that the data obtained led to a deep understanding of the local context.

This study uses a qualitative methodology with a literature review approach, which aims to explore the values of the philosophy of life of the Alor people and their contribution to parenting (Creswell, 2002). The literature review is conducted through a systematic process to ensure the validity and relevance of the data used. The article selection process is carried out by applying inclusion criteria, which includes articles, journals, books, and government reports that discuss the cultural values of the Alor people or culture-related parenting themes, published in the last ten years to ensure context relevance. Sources used must be available in Indonesian and

English and can be accessed through academic databases such as Google Scholar, JSTOR, University proceedings, or institutional repositories. In contrast, exclusion criteria include articles that have no direct relevance to cultural or parenting themes in Alor, sources that are unverified or come from non-academic publications, as well as documents with limited access that cannot be obtained in full. The Data was collected using keywords such as "cultural values", "parenting in Alor", and "Alor cultural traditions" through searches in academic databases and University repositories to ensure broad coverage. After the initial selection, each source is reviewed to ensure the relevance and quality of the content. In this study, there are 15 articles that meet the inclusion criteria and are used as the main source in assessing the cultural values of Alor and its contribution to parenting.

#### *Data analysis*

After obtaining the data sources, the next stage was the analysis process following Creswell's (2012) recommendations which involved three main steps: coding, classification, and thematization. At the coding stage (Tesch, 1990), the data obtained was broken down into small segments of data relevant to the research topic. Each segment of data is then given a code or label that reflects a particular theme or category, such as traditional Alor values, the application of life philosophy in parenting, and social interaction in Alor society. The coded data will be grouped based on similarities or relationships between categories, such as the influence of life philosophy on parenting or the role of social traditions in parenting. The final stage of thematization involves further grouping the data based on larger themes or patterns, which illustrate the broader relationships between cultural values, parenting and social traditions. In this stage, researchers were able to identify key themes such as *Ite Kakang Aring* (we are all brothers and sisters), *Tara Miti Tomi Nuku* (different but still one) and the *lego-lego* customary tradition and how these philosophies translate in the context of parenting in Alor.

#### *Compilation and presentation*

After the thematic analysis was completed, the next step was to organize the findings systematically. The findings are presented based on predetermined themes (Creswell, 2012), such as the Alor community's philosophy of life, the application of these values in childcare, and the social and cultural implications of existing traditions. Each theme is explained in detail by providing concrete examples from the analyzed literature. The presentation also includes comparisons between the findings and previous literature, and how the findings enrich the understanding of parenting in Alor within the local cultural context.

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Through a comprehensive literature analysis, three philosophies of life of the people of Alor Regency were found that have noble values and are still practiced today (Table 1). These philosophies include: *ite Kakang Aring* (we are brothers), the motto *Tara Miti Tomi Nuku* (different but one heart), and the tradition of *Lego-Lego* dance. These three principles play an important role in shaping the character of Alor society, including in the context of daily child care.

As one of the districts in East Nusa Tenggara, Alor has philosophical values that guide the life of the local community. These values are often a guideline in building relationships between various tribes, traditions, and religions adopted by local communities. This philosophy also indirectly affects the upbringing of children in Alor Regency. Some of them are the philosophy of *ite Kakang Aring*, *Tara Miti Tomi Nuku*, and the typical tradition of *Lego-Lego* Dance, which is still very well preserved by the local community.

#### *Ite Kakang Aring*

*Ite Kakang Aring* is one of the cultural concepts that have deep meaning in the context of the Alor Regency community, especially the Alor Kecil community. This concept serves as a unifying value that binds the different social and cultural elements in the area, especially in the midst of ethnic and religious diversity. In this context, the author explains that the term "ite" means "we" or "We", while "Kakang Aring" can be interpreted as "brother" or "family." Thus, *ite Kakang Aring* reflects the spirit of togetherness and solidarity of the Alor Regency community consisting of various tribes and religious backgrounds. *Ite Kakang Aring* serves as a binder between tribes and religions in Alor Regency. In a diverse society, this value helps to create harmony and reduce the potential for social conflict (Berimau et al, 2022). *Ite Kakang Aring* also plays a role in the education of social values to the younger generation. Through teaching about the importance of unity and mutual respect, the community hopes to build a stronger and more tolerant society (Berimau et al., 2022).

Sociologist Emile Durkheim describes one of the concepts of peaceful solidarity that supports the concept, namely organic solidarity. This theory explains how people in society interact and relate to each other, as well as how harmony can arise between them (Durkheim: 1973). Solidarity allows harmony between religious people by making room for differences and diversity. Due to the need for each other to achieve common goals, people of different faiths can work together in this context (George Ritzer and Douglas J. Goodman, 2008: 90-91). In the context of Indonesia which is rich in ethnic and religious diversity, *Kakang Aring's Ite* values are very relevant. Given challenges such as intolerance and radicalization, the application of this concept can be a bulwark against

social conflicts. The community is invited to continue to maintain the values of unity in order to remain able to coexist peacefully. Thus, the Kakang Aring is not only a concept but also a philosophy of life that supports the creation of a harmonious and sustainable society.

**Tabel. 1 List of Article**

No	Author	Year	Title	Journal	Number of citation
1	Berimau, I. F	2022	Ite Kakang Aring sebagai Nilai Budaya Naratif dalam Masyarakat Alor Kecil dari Perspektif Pendampingan Budaya	Thesis. Prosseding UKSW	37-43
2	Manimoy, I. G	2021	Tarian Lego-lego sebagai Pendampingan Pastoral bagi Masyarakat Alor	<i>Jurnal Teologi dan Pelayanan Kristiani</i>	2
3	Iswanto, I., & Hutapea, R. H	2020	Lego-Lego As Phenomenon of Inter-Religios and Cultural in Alor Society. Harmoni	Jurnal Multikultural & Multireligius	90-91
4	Lenama, H	2023	A Symbolic Meaning Of Lego-Lego Dance And Music As A Media For Social Integration: Case Study: Kabola Tribe Community, Alor District	Journal of Music Creation, Study and Performance	44-45
5	Sunarti, S., Atisah, A., Suryami, S., & Firdaus, W	2019	Lego-Lego: An Attempt to Cultivate and Nurture Plurality and Multiculture in the Alor Tradition	In Proceedings of 1st Workshop on Environmental Science, Society, and Technology WESTECH 2018, December 8th, 2018, Medan, Indonesia.	9
6	Djobo, T. D. A	2017	<i>Taramiti Tominuku Tamengmeti Akengnuku: Studi tentang Eklesiologi Konstruktif di Jemaat GMT Mebung</i>	Repository. UKSW.edu	13, 19-23
7	Djobo, T. D. A	2021	Makna Tara Miti Tomi Nuku Bagi Komunitas Islam Dan Kristen Di Kabupaten Alor Ditinjau Dari Perspektif Studi Perdamaian	Thesis. Katalog. UKDW.ac.id	22-24
8	Lalel, D. K	(2020)	<i>Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Karakter Tari Lego-Lego Suku Alurung Di Sanggar Tari Golu Gapung Kabupaten Alor</i>	(Doctoral dissertation, Institut Seni Indonesia Yogyakarta)	5-6

### Tara Miti Tomi Nuku

The phrase "Tara Miti Tomi Nuku" comes from the Abui language which means "different but one heart" or "Although our seats or dwellings are different and far apart, but we are one blood/one bond." Abui itself, is one of the tribes in Alor Regency. The principle of "Tara Miti Tomi Nuku" teaches that despite different social status or place of residence, all remain one heart and one bond. Alor society has developed traditional ways of avoiding conflict, including religious-based conflict. By putting forward the values of "Tara Miti Tomi Nuku", they are able to maintain solidarity between different groups, even in times of tension in other regions. In Alor, communities of different tribes and religions live together, respecting their differences. The Motto "Tara Miti Tomi Nuku" is used to teach the importance of mutual respect between religious communities through the oral tradition of Lego-Lego (Djobo, 2017).

Several studies have explored the role of the phrase "Tara Miti Tomi Nuku" in fostering social harmony. For example, in the interreligious relations between Muslims and Christians in Alor, "Tara Miti Tomi Nuku" serves as a cultural framework that encourages peaceful coexistence. "Tara Miti Tomi Nuku" emphasizes mutual respect and cooperation, offering a model for maintaining peace in a pluralistic society. This approach is reflected in day-to-day interactions and broader community practices, such as shared festivals and conflict resolution (Djobo, 2022). Similarly, other research highlights the relevance of "Tara Miti Tomi Nuku" as a form of solidarity within local communities, including migrant groups from Alor, who seek to maintain these values in their new environment despite facing challenges (Duka, 2024). Thus, the philosophy of "Tara Miti Tomi Nuku" is not only a slogan but also a living practice that is integrated in various social and cultural aspects of the Alor people, helping them to maintain inter-tribal harmony effectively.

### Tradition Lego-Lego

Lego-lego is a traditional art originating from the Alor community. Lego-lego is a combination of dance, singing, and music (Iswanto & Hutapea, 2020). The Lego-Lego dance is a vivid example of the application of the philosophy of Tara Miti Tomi Nuku and Ite Akang Aring in the daily life of the people of Alor. Rituals such as Lego-Lego involve rhymes that signify that "although born and raised in different places, surely these differences actually bind them into one clump." Lego-Lego is intended to invite people to unite to build villages and countries. This dance is commonly used in all ceremonial activities in Alor, also when welcoming guests, weddings, etc. The noble

message and meaning in this dance involves rhymes that signify unity and social integration. Lego-lego dance and music symbolize unity and togetherness, as well as being a medium to teach religious tolerance (Katubi, 2020; Lenama, 2023).

The Lego-lego dance is performed in a circular formation, accompanied by singing and traditional musical instruments such as gongs (Iswanto & Hutapea, 2020). This dance plays an important role in various rituals and cultural events that reflect the ideology and social structure of the Alor people (Iswanto, 2020). According to Herman (We & Fauziah, 2021), cultural heritage in society that is passed down from generation to generation is called traditional culture. These include religion, tradition, art, music, dance, folklore, and traditional dress. Customs are often characteristic of a society and play an important role in preserving the cultural heritage of the nation. This dance is inclusive, involving the participation of various groups, both children and adults as a symbolic form of unity and solidarity (Manimoy, 2021).

Lego traditions-lego serves as a medium to promote interreligious and intercultural harmony, where religious values are integrated into the cultural identity of the group. These Lego traditions are characteristic of the people of Alor Regency who prioritize harmony in living together in society (Iswanto, 2020). In addition, the Lego-Lego dance also serves as a traditional ritual, an expression of belief in God Almighty, a symbol of agricultural fertility and marine products, as well as a means of entertainment. This dance depicts an expression of happiness, gratitude to God, and a moral message to avoid behavior that violates customary and legal rules, which is conveyed through rhymes that are chanted during the performance. This dance also serves as a cover for a series of events or activities as well as a medium for delivering messages to invited guests (Lalel, 2020).

In khazanah of Malay expressions, there is a proverb that is often quoted: "although citrus fruits are on the mountain and salt is in the sea, the two are united in a cauldron." This proverb represents harmony in diversity which is also reflected in the life of the people of Alor. The spirit of unity is evident in the performance of The Lego-Lego dance participants (Sunarti et al, 2019). Through this tradition, lego-lego is not only a typical regional dance but also a symbol of unity and unity as Indonesian citizens.

#### *Integration Of Alor Philosophy Values In Child Care*

The integration of the values of the philosophy of life of the Alor people in the practice of parenting emphasizes the importance of forming the character of children as individuals who are moral, responsible, have a high level of tolerance, and are based on a sense of caring for others. These values not only focus on individual aspects, but also emphasize the importance of harmonious relationships in the social environment. Through a culture of mutual respect, mutual support, and strengthening the spirit of unity in diversity, children are expected to grow and develop into individuals with integrity, efficient, and able to make a positive contribution to society and the nation.

#### *Mutual Respect and Mutual Support*

The concept of mutual respect and support is important in fostering harmony in a diverse society. Filosofi The philosophy of "Ite Kakang Aring" emphasizes respect for others and interdependence in the family and society. Children are taught to treat their elders and peers with dignity and compassion, which reflects a deep sense of moral and ethical responsibility (Berimau & Febriany, 2022).

Parental care plays an important role in the moral education of children by emphasizing the attitude of compassion, honesty, decency, and concern for others (Hasnawati, 2016). The value of "ite Kakang Aring" fosters children's understanding of their place in the wider social network, which fosters a strong sense of belonging in society. Parents instill in children the importance of humility and common well-being, showing them that success and well-being come from caring and mutually beneficial cooperation. Research results Acep et al. (2023) support mutual respect and appreciation is essential to building inclusive, equitable, and harmonious societies.

The attitude and behavior of children is strongly influenced by cultural norms, especially in the upbringing of children from an early age. Therefore, Orangtua has a great responsibility to inculcate moral values in children from childhood (Faridayanti et al., 2020). Through the example of Alor's parents, they taught the value of respect and mutual support for each other. Alor's parents also taught these values in using folklore, one of which was entitled "kakek padamot and nenek mangmot." This story comes from the Abui tribe, which describes the origin of the mainland island of Alor. In this story, grandfather Padamot and grandmother Mangmot show mutual respect and cooperation as they attempt to create land from the sea. They throw stones to test the depth of the water, which reflects the value of togetherness and respect for nature (Language Development and Development Agency, 2018). This story also teaches the importance of respecting local traditions and wisdom. In line with that, according to Relin et al. (2018), folklore can teach local wisdom such as compassion, politeness, and responsibility.

#### *Unity In Diversity*

Tolerance and mutual respect are important aspects in Indonesia's pluralistic society to realize harmony and peace (M. T. Huda & Rikhla Sinta Ilva Sari, 2020; Ridwan Sa'idi, 2017). This attitude is reflected in the motto "Tara Miti Tomi Nuku," representing unity and solidarity across ethnic, religious, and cultural differences, which

promotes the idea that regardless of physical or ideological distance, people are bound by the same humanity. Correspondingly, Albina et al. (2024) support the role of cultural values in strengthening solidarity and appreciation for one another. Starting from the value of tolerance, which values differences without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, tribe, religion, language, or culture.

Tolerance among the people of Alor Regency has been the concern of academics in various studies. Gomang (2006), in his article entitled "Muslim and Christian Alliances: The 'Familial Relationship' between Inland and Coastal Peoples of the Belagar Community in Eastern Indonesia," discusses the relationship between Muslims in coastal areas and Christians in the interior. Wellfelt (2007), through his work "Diversity & Shared Identity: A Case Study of Interfaith Relations in Alor, Eastern Indonesia." Describes how three stone symbols—religion, government, and tradition—play a role in creating interfaith harmony in Alor. Rodemeier (2010), in his research entitled "Islam in the Protestant Environment of the Alor and Pantar Islands," highlights the perspective of the Muslim minority in living amidst the dominant Christian community. This paper reflects the spirit of the motto "Tara Miti Tomi Nuku," which is one of the important philosophical values among the people of Alor Regency.

Parents in Alor raise their children with the understanding that cooperation and tolerance are key to maintaining peace and harmony in a multicultural society. Applied communal parenting practices teach children to value differences early on, shaping them into individuals who value inclusiveness and are capable of peaceful coexistence. These values of tolerance are also embedded in the motto Tara Miti Tomi Nuku, which is passed down from generation to generation (Katubi, 2020).

The people of Alor have long applied these principles through various interfaith activities. Adults of different faiths cooperate in the construction of houses of worship, celebrate religious holidays together, and regularly engage in interfaith dialogue to discuss social and religious issues. These activities aim to increase understanding and reduce prejudice between members of different religious communities (Katubi, 2020). Thus, parents in Alor pass on the values of unity in diversity to their children, which is an important provision in living life in the future.

#### *Community And Cooperation*

Tradition in Indonesian society teaches the values of cooperation and harmony (Gushidayat et al., 2018; March & August, 2022). Lego dance—lego symbolizes cooperation and collective movement to achieve a common goal. In the concept of parenting, this tradition teaches children the value of working together harmoniously. Through participation in this traditional dance, children learn the importance of teamwork and harmony. The physical act of moving in unison with others reflects a broader life lesson that individual success is inextricably linked to group success. The dance also teaches discipline and respect for cultural traditions. Tarian for Early Childhood is another way to transmit culture, facilitate the process of socialization, enculturation, and internalization, as well as introduce children to cultural norms and traditions (Kusumastuti, 2004).

The poem that accompanies the Lego-lego dance has a deep meaning as a link between members of the Alor community. This verse is reminiscent of the historical relationship of human beings in the past that came from a common ancestor, with religion and residence as an individual choice. It emphasizes that there is no reason to be hostile to one another. On the contrary, cooperation and community spirit must continue to be maintained and passed on to future generations (Katubi, 2020). Through the Lego-Lego dance, children learn character-building values such as tolerance, respect, and love of peace (Satyananda et al., 2017). This dance serves as a means to instill positive character education in everyday life, helping them become more responsive and caring individuals in the community.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Values embedded in the philosophy of Alor society—IteKakang Aring, Tara Miti Tomi Nuku, and Lego-lego dance—become basic elements in shaping parenting practices. These philosophies promote key principles such as mutual respect, unity in diversity, and collective cooperation. Ite Kakang Aring fosters respect and humility and teaches children the importance of family ties and interdependence in society. Tara Miti Tomi Nuku emphasizes solidarity, encouraging children to value diversity and contribute to the unity of society. The Lego-lego tradition, through participation in communal dances, instills the importance of working together for a common cause, reinforcing a sense of social cohesion and cultural identity. Together, these elements contribute to raising children who are socially responsible, culturally aware, and ready to maintain harmony in a pluralistic society.

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