



Mitigating character shifts through the internalization of pambudi luhur values in mberot culture at elementary school age

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ABSTRACT

Character degradation among the younger generation has become a growing concern in the modern era, marked by declining moral integrity, social empathy, and appreciation of local wisdom. One form of local wisdom that has managed to gained widespread popularity and attract the attention of the masses from various generations in the Malang area is the Mberot culture. The Mberot culture is a traditional art form of Malang Raya that originated from Bantengan performances. The popularity of Mberot is also followed by the younger generation of elementary school age who are not only cultural connoisseurs but also participants or performers of Mberot. This research aims to examine the internalization of the value of noble virtue in the Mberot culture. This qualitative descriptive study collecting data through direct observation, in-depth interviews with the owner of the Mberot studio, and documentation of the performance process. Data were analyzed through reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing stages. The results of the study explained that Mberot culture contains three main dimensions of noble values, namely local, religious-spiritual, and moral-ethical wisdom, which are internalized in each stage of the performance (pre-performance, implementation, and post-performance). Based on the score calculation table, the value of local wisdom obtained the highest score, followed by religious-spiritual, and moral-ethical values.

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INTRODUCTION

Local culture has an important role in shaping the nation's identity, character, and amid the accelerating currents of globalization and digitalization (Budiyo et al., 2017). One of the forms of local culture that is growing rapidly is Mberot, a typical Malang Raya art that combines elements of dance, music, pencak silat, and spiritual rituals that appear in the form of dynamic performances, and since 2023 has experienced high popularity, especially among children and teenagers (Ardiansyah 2023). Radar Malang (2024) notes that the art community Mberot has been widely spread with a total of around 1,336 groups in the Greater Malang area, consisting of 980 groups in Malang Regency, 85 in Batu City, and 243 in Malang City. However, behind its popularity, the social phenomenon that accompanies the culture Mberot shows indications of causing a shift in the character of the younger generation, especially elementary school age. Some Mberot performances are often misused by individuals for negative activities, such as chaos and uncontrolled behavior that triggers bad stigma in society (Alfan Ardi Pratama et al. 2024). This condition is a challenge for character education in elementary school children, who psychosocially are still in the stage of internalizing values and are prone to imitating environmental behavior (Dewi et al., 2023).

Elementary-school participants in Mberot receive intensive training sessions before performing, which has an impact on abandoned schoolwork. According to the confession of a teacher in Tawangrejeni village, the children of the participants or performers of Mberot often practice until night so that you experience fatigue and lack of sleep. This makes the participants or performers of Mberot who are still students often fall asleep and lack focus in class. In a study conducted by Muhammad Yusnan (2021) stating that early childhood students do not have the ability to do time management, students tend not to be able to divide the time that should be used productively. This happens because elementary school children have not been able to determine the needs and scale of priorities that must be prioritized (Muhammad Yusnan 2021). In addition to sleep and decreased focus on learning, lack of sleep can also cause behavioral and emotional problems that result in the formation of children's character (Balasad et al. 2025). Early character formation is needed to foster a good national character and be the main key to building the nation (Sukma 2021).

Character education itself is an effort to apply moral, religious, and ethical values to students through science (Ariel Athahudan Pratama et al. 2023). Education and the application of science can be conveyed in various ways, including by using culture and art. In addition to being able to function as entertainment, art also functions as a medium of ethical, aesthetic, moral, and creative education, in order to instill the character values contained in it (Rizal et al. 2021). Mberot As one of the cultures that contains artistic values and is in demand by the younger generation, elementary school age does not only have a negative impact. In practice, Mberot It also contains noble cultural values so that it can be used as a mitigation of the shift in the character of elementary school children. Art education has value for character formation (Kristiana 2017). Character education is a systematic effort to teach positive behavior that reflects the nation's cultural values (Listiady Ilham 2016). Character education based on local wisdom is very important in life, because it is able to strengthen the cultural and social values that apply in society if applied contextually (Dhewantoro 2022).

Reasons for cultural selection Mberot In this study, it is based on its unique characteristics that combine elements of performing arts, spiritual rituals, and the active involvement of elementary school children. In contrast to other local arts such as mask

office or ketoprak, Mberot is growing massively and has a strong appeal among children and adolescents. Previous literature reviews show that research on culture in Malang still mostly focuses on the preservation of cultural values in religious and social contexts, such as research by (Fauzi and Hilmi, 2024), (Ana Sopanah et al. (2024), (Frenadya A, 2024), and (M Burhani, 2024). The gap is seen in the absence of an in-depth exploration of noble values. Based on these gaps, this study offers a novelty using in-depth interviews with cultural studio owners Mberot, field observations, and documentation of cultural performances Mberot to examine the internalization of noble values in culture Mberot and analyze the dominance of these values. This research is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the study of culture and noble values, as well as as a strategic effort to mitigate the shift in culture-based character.

METHOD

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation that focuses on the excavation and analysis of values in culture *Mberot*. Descriptive qualitative research is research that aims to describe the phenomena that occur in the research subject in depth (Sakiah and Effendi 2021). This approach is carried out by describing the facts obtained from direct interaction with cultural actors *Mberot* as well as an in-depth observation of performance practices *Mberot*. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to understand cultural significance contextually and deeply from the perspective of the perpetrator society *Mberot* itself.

The research location is in Tawangrejeni Village, Malang Regency on July 12-19, 2025. The location was chosen because Tawangrejeni Village is one of the centers for the development of the *Mberot community* with routine performance activities. In addition, this community actively involves elementary school children in various stages of performance, so that it becomes a representative location to examine the process of internalizing the value of pambudi luhur. The research subjects consisted of the owners of the *Mberot* cultural studio, trainers, and elementary school children who were members of the *Mberot group*. The key informants of the study are the owners of the studio, while the supporting informants include coaches and members of the primary school age group. In this study, the researcher served as the primary instrument, directly involved in the data collection process through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The researcher also triangulated the source to maintain the validity of the data.

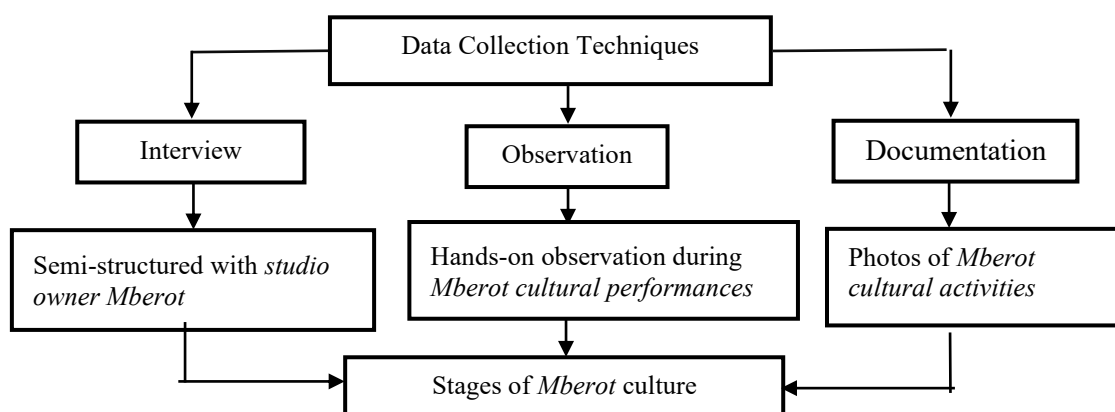


Figure 1. Data Collection Techniques

Data collection in this study was carried out with several data sources. In qualitative research, it is very important to understand meaning through the exploration that

individuals or groups give to social or humanitarian problems, as well as human behavior, and the social world (Hamal and Sapkota 2020). Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with cultural studio owners *Mberot* in Tawangrejeni Village, direct observation of performance practices *Mberot*, which includes pre-performance, implementation, to post-performance, and documentation.

The data analysis in this study was carried out by descriptive qualitative analysis of the Miles and Huberman interactive model. The analysis is carried out in stages through three processes that take place in a cyclical manner (Sri Annisa and Mailani 2023). Namely, the stage of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verification. The validity of the conclusions was tested through triangulation of source data. This study uses the source triangulation technique, which is by comparing data obtained from various sources to increase the validity and credibility of the findings. Triangulation is a multi-method approach that a researcher takes to collect and analyze data (Alfansyur, A., & Mariyani 2020). Triangulation was carried out through three data collection techniques, namely in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documentation.

This study uses indicators that refer to the three dimensions of the value of virtue, namely moral-ethics, local wisdom, and religious-spiritual. Each dimension has several derivative indicators, these indicators are used as a reference in the process of observation, interviews, and data analysis. Details of the dimensions and indicators are written in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Indicators

Research Variables	Value Dimension	Indicator
Düsseldorf	Ethical Morals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fair and honest attitude 2. Social Responsibility 3. Empathy and tolerance 4. Example
	Local Wisdom	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Culture and customs 2. Contains noble values 3. Has a conservative function 4. Engaging the community collectively
	Religious-spiritual	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation of worship rituals 2. Spiritual value 3. Connection to transcendent forces 4. Non-formal spirituality (meditation and reflection)

The indicators of the value of virtue in Table 1 are adopted from several studies including ethical moral research conducted by Dewi et al. (2023), local wisdom indicators adopted from the research Rummar (2022), then the Spiritual Religious indicator adopts the research of the Amir ac et al, (2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The researcher conducted interviews with the owners of the *Mberot* cultural studio, direct observation of *Mberot's* performances, and documentation on July 12-19, 2025. These findings indicate that were the internalization of *the stages of Mberot* culture consisting of pre-performance, performance implementation, and post-performance.

Pre-Show Stage

Interviews with studio owners confirmed that the selection of the day and place of the event always follows the traditional calendar, especially in the month of As-Shura, as

a form of respect for the tradition of "Every time there is a certain moment must be carried out, such as the shuroan in the month of As-Shura." (Interview of Studio Owner *Mberot* Tawangrejeni Village, 2025). This finding is strengthened by observations that show that there are preparations according to customary rules. This illustrates the internalization of the value of local wisdom and social responsibility in preserving cultural heritage. Before performing, *Mberot performers* also did exercises and rehearsals as explained by *the owner of the Mberot studio* "The first thing we apply is discipline, the training hours must be right." (Interview with studio owner *Mberot* Tawangrejeni Village, 2025).

The opening ritual stage in the form of slametan and the presentation of *ucok* will show a strong spiritual dimension. The interview explained the function of the ritual as communication with ancestors and spirit creatures "Ucok will be a need for spirit creatures, containing coconut, banana, jambe, tape, eggs, frankincense, seven kinds of flowers" (Interview of the owner of *the Mberot studio* in Tawangrejeni Village, 2025), observations show the solemn implementation of slametan.



Figure 2. Opening Offering Ritual

The documentation in figure 2 shows the arrangement of offerings such as coconut, banana, jambe, tape, eggs, frankincense, and seven kinds of flowers. In the selection of clothing and equipment, observations showed dancers wearing dominant black clothing with red accents and leg bell attributes, which was reinforced by the documentation of costume photos. This data indicates that clothing symbols play a role in strengthening the value of cultural preservation and local wisdom.



Figure 3. Mberot Players' Clothing and Attributes

At the group coordination stage, the results of the interview explained that there is a coordinating structure in charge of regulating the course of the training and performance. "From all our members, we form a coordinator from the child to coordinate each group." (Interview of Studio Owner *Mberot* Tawangrejeni Village, 2025).

Observations record harmonious interactions between members, and documentation shows an atmosphere of collective cooperation.

Performance Stage

The stage of the performance shows the integration of pencak silat movements with dynamic bull movements. Observation data shows an *elementary school-age* Mberot perpetrator who is demonstrating a typical swinging, jumping, spinning movement, documentation data that strengthens the existence of traditional art elements carried out by elementary school children shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4. Elementary-school Mberot Performers

The next stage is the sacred element seen in the eighth ritual which displays the phenomenon of trance. The interview data states "Not everyone can, only those who are able to interact with the object" (Interview of the owner of the *studio* in Tawangrejeni Village, 2025) the owner of the studio explained that only certain individuals are able to interact with transcendent beings, observations show this transcendental moment.



Figure 5. Kalapan

The documentation in Figure 5 shows the mystical expression of the perpetrator. This emphasizes the connection with transcendent forces and spiritual religious values inherent in *the Mberot* culture.

Post-Show Stage

The post-performance stage is marked by a closing prayer and cleansing of the place. Based on the results of the interview, after the eighth procession was over, all actors and supporters of the activity performed a closing prayer as an expression of gratitude for the smooth running of the event. This prayer not only serves as a formal ritual, but also as a form of respect for the ancestors and the transcendent forces that are believed to have kept the performance going. "After completing the kalapan activity, we regain consciousness like ordinary humans, then close with prayer" (Interview of the Owner of *the Mberot studio* in Tawangrejeni Village, 2025). Observations in the field showed that the closing prayer was carried out solemnly, led by coach *Mberot*. At the end of the activity, it is necessary to 'clean the place' in the village punden. The observation shows respect for the environment led by village elders.



Figure 6. Spot Cleaning in Punden

The documentation in figure 6 shows that physical cleansing includes the return of the staging site to its original condition, while symbolic cleansing is in the form of respect for the spiritual energy around the punden area.

Pambudi Luhur in *Mberot Culture*

Using literature and culture studies search *Mberot* contains noble value in the internalization of the performance. The noble value is the value of noble wisdom which is formed from the words *budi* and *luhur*, *budi* which means mental tool is the guide of reason and feelings to determine good and bad, while *luhur* means high and noble, noble pride is the behavior of a person based on reason to always do good (Setyo Pambudi and Rz. Ricky Satria Wiranata 2020). Pambudi luhur in the arts includes an appreciation of cultural heritage that prioritizes morality and ethics in social interactions, art, and culture which is considered important in shaping the nation's identity (Budiyono, Yoga and Feriandi, 2017). Value It includes three main aspects, namely local wisdom, moral and ethical values, and religious and spiritual values. Moral and ethical values are values that include a sense of fairness, humanity, mutual tolerance, and honesty that create good behavior (Dewi et al., 2023). The second value is local wisdom in question is the national identity that is reflected cross-culturally, which ultimately realizes national cultural values (Rummar 2022). The value of religiosity can be interpreted as a value that has a basis for believing in God depending on beliefs and worship practices. Spirituality itself has the same function, which is to understand life (Amir ac et al. 2016).

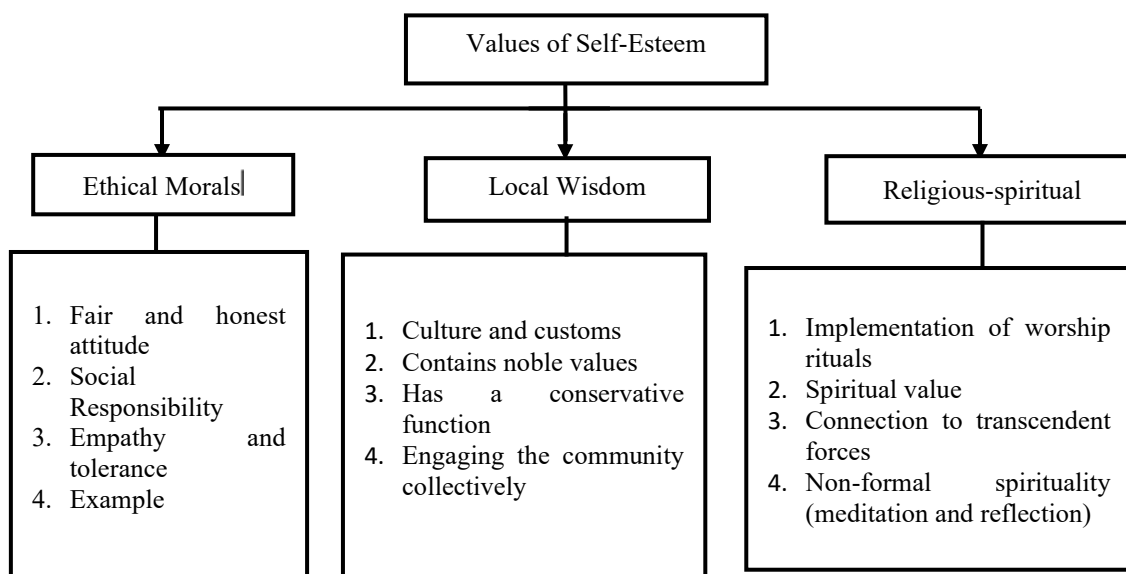


Figure 7. Indicators of the Value Dimension of Pambudi Luhur

Figure 7 explains the three main dimensions that are the basis for the internalization of character in this tradition, namely moral ethics, local wisdom, and spiritual religious. The moral dimension of ethics is reflected in fair and honest attitudes, social responsibility, empathy, tolerance, and example shown by traditional leaders and communities in every stage of *Mberot*. These values form harmonious behavior and strengthen solidarity between community members. The dimension of local wisdom can be seen from the practice of *Mberot* which is based on the culture and customs of the Malang people, contains noble values, has a conservative function to preserve traditions, and involves the community collectively in its implementation.

This shows that *Mberot* is not just an art ritual, but also a unifying medium that strengthens local cultural identity. Finally, the spiritual religious dimension is seen through the implementation of worship rituals, the appreciation of spiritual values, and the connection with transcendent forces that are believed to provide protection and blessings, non-formal spiritual activities such as meditation and reflection also accompany this tradition, strengthening the inner awareness and spiritual meaning for the practitioners and the supporting community.

Based on Table 1 shows the process of internalizing the value of virtue in *Mberot culture* which is divided into three main stages, namely pre-performance, implementation, and post-performance. In the pre-performance stage, the value of local wisdom emerges strongly through the determination of the day and place that follows the customary calendar, as well as the use of distinctive cultural attributes. Religious and spiritual values are seen in the slametan ritual with the offering of *ucok bakal*. At the implementation stage, moral and ethical values emerge through the discipline of movement, while religious values are seen in the *sacred rituals of the eighth*. The post-performance stage shows the religious and spiritual dimension through the closing prayer and the cleansing of the place as a form of respect for the transcendent power. Overall, this table shows that the value of local wisdom predominates, followed by religious-spiritual and moral-ethical values.

Table 2. The Results of Internalizing the Values of Pambudi Luhur *Mberot Culture*

Stages of <i>Mberot Culture</i>	Morals and Ethics	Local Wisdom	Religious and Spiritual
Pre-Med Cultural Show			
1. Selection of day and place (Following the traditional calendar and holiday events)		√	
2. Drills and rehearsals (Drills show discipline and cooperation)	√		
3. Ritual of opening slametan/offering using ucok bakal (Ritual as a form of spiritual communication with ancestors and astral beings)		√	√
4. Selection of clothing and equipment (The use of local cultural attributes reinforces cultural identity)		√	
5. Group coordination (Coordination between members demonstrates the value of collective ethics)	√		
Implementation of <i>Mberot Cultural Performance</i>			
6. <i>Mberot</i> Movement in the Beginning (The <i>Mberot</i> Dance combines dynamic movements adopted from pencak silat and bull movements, such as jumping, swinging, and spinning)		√	
7. Sacred or Mystical Elements with Kalapan (The condition of trance, establishing mystical relationships and beliefs with regional spiritual beings)			√
Post <i>Mberot Cultural Show</i>			
8. Closing Prayer (A final prayer as a form of gratitude and spiritual closure)	√	√	√
9. Cleansing Self and Place with Offerings (Restoration is done by paying respect to the body and spiritual energy around you)		√	√
Result	3	6	4

DISCUSSION

This study revealed that the culture *Mberot* Not only a means of entertainment, but also a medium of internalizing the value of pambudi luhur which is consistently present in every stage of the performance. The values of local wisdom, religious-spiritual, and moral-ethical are the main foundations that shape the behavior of art actors, especially elementary school children involved in this activity. In the pre-performance stage, the value of local wisdom appears strong through the selection of days and places based on the customary calendar. Dating is a calculation system that regulates and arranges time in a certain period to determine the implementation of social, economic, and customary activities (Nur Robaniyah and Nur Azizah 2023). The use of cultural attributes such as the dominant black and red costumes symbolizes strength, courage, and protection from negative energies (Febrianti, Huda, and Soetomo 2025). This color combination reinforces the mystical atmosphere in the show and shows respect for ancestral traditions while reinforcing cultural identity.

Slametan ritual with *Squirt Will Be Yours* presenting religious-spiritual values, teaching children that this culture is inseparable from the relationship with transcendent forces. *Squirt Will Be* itself is referred to as an offering in tradition that has a symbolic meaning as a medium to get closer to God, a form of gratitude, and a means of rejecting reinforcements (Ristian, Fardani, and Riswari 2024). The sacrificial symbols contain ancestral clues that contain noble values for cultural preservation. Meanwhile, group training and coordination show moral-ethical values, where children are accustomed to

discipline, responsibility, and maintaining collective ethics. This process is in accordance with the theory of Lickona (1991), which emphasizes that character is formed through the habituation of values in real activities that are in harmony with the research conducted by the Astriya (2023) mentioned that the formation of children's character can be done through the habituation method, which is activities that are carried out consistently such as routine and programmatic activities.

At the implementation stage, the dance movement that combines elements of pencak silat with the movement of the bull not only symbolizes strength and agility, but also becomes a representation of courage in facing challenges. Children who act out these movements learn to express themselves while understanding the symbolic meaning of each movement. The Sacred Element (*trance*) shows how the spiritual aspect is inherent in this culture, reinforcing the transcendental consciousness of the performer and the audience. This phenomenon is in line with research Istiwianah (2017), which states that the dancer's movements when experiencing *trance* (*trance*) is not just improvisation, but is considered a form of spiritual communication with supernatural forces, so it has a sacred meaning in the context of ritual.

In the post-performance stage, it shows the reflective dimension of the value of virtue. The closing prayer is not only a formality, but a form of gratitude for the success of the performance. In the show, there are players who experience *trance* or *trance*, closure is carried out by the process of awareness through certain rituals carried out by the handler or spiritual figure (Suryandoko 2019). Self-cleaning and the place show ecological awareness as well as respect for the spiritual energy present during the activity. These values form a collective awareness that every action must end with respect for oneself, others, and the environment. Thus, the arts *Mberot* It has proven to be a vehicle for character education that instills noble values through direct experience, not just theoretical teaching.

The results of the score calculation reinforce the field findings by showing that the value of local wisdom occupies the highest position in culture *Mberot*. This proves that this culture plays a big role in preserving traditions, strengthening cultural identity, and fostering a sense of community. The tradition of scheduling performances, the use of cultural attributes, and group coordination are concrete manifestations of this value. These findings are in line with Sopanah, *et al* (2024), which emphasizes that traditional arts have a strategic role in strengthening social ties and preserving cultural heritage.

Religious-spiritual values are in second place, which can be seen from the slametan ritual, a phenomenon, as well as a closing prayer. This aspect shows that the culture *Mberot* Not only physical activity, but also a medium of spiritual learning that forms awareness of the existence of transcendental forces. The children involved learn to understand that art can be a means of spiritual communication, as explained (Kristiana 2017) that education based on religious culture is able to strengthen the spiritual dimension of the younger generation. Meanwhile, moral-ethical values get the lowest scores, but still have an important contribution to character building. Through regular practice and active involvement, children are trained to be disciplined, responsible, and maintain good social relationships with fellow group members. Although the score is lower, this aspect has a fundamental role as the foundation of children's ethical behavior in daily life. The combination of these three values shows that the culture *Mberot* provide a holistic experience for children in preserving traditions (local wisdom), strengthening spirituality (religious), and forming good social behavior (moral-ethical). This is proof

that *Mberot* It can be used as a mitigation strategy against the shift in the character of elementary school children, who currently tend to be influenced by global culture.

CONCLUSION

Mberot culture has a strategic role as an internalization of the value of virtue for elementary school children involved in it. These values are manifested in three main dimensions, namely local wisdom, religious-spiritual, and moral-ethical dimensions, which are reflected in every stage of the performance, starting from pre-performance, implementation, to post-performance. Based on the results of the score calculation, local wisdom emerged as the most dominant value, showing the strong role of this culture in preserving traditions, strengthening cultural identity, and fostering togetherness. Religious-spiritual values occupy the second position, reflected through slametan rituals, *kalapan* phenomena, and closing prayers that instill spiritual awareness for the perpetrator and the community. Moral-ethical values, although obtained a lower score, are still significant in the formation of children's character through the habituation of discipline, responsibility, and cooperation. Overall, *the culture of the berot* does not only function as entertainment or tradition, but also as an effective means of character education in mitigating the shift in the character of elementary school children. The preservation of this *Mberot* is important to maintain cultural heritage while strengthening the identity of the younger generation in the midst of globalization. This study underscores *Mberot* culture as an effective medium for character education rooted in local wisdom, contributing to efforts to mitigate moral decline among elementary-school students.

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