

## Children's Character Education in The Principles of Self-Identity Malay Perspective Tenas Effendy

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### Abstract

The greatest challenge in the current era of globalization and modernization is to uphold and impart moral values and character to children. There are numerous cases where children lose their direction and ethics due to the influence of various media, technology, and foreign cultures. This research aims to examine the values of early childhood character education from the perspective of Malay identity principles by Tenas Effendy. The study employs a literature review method (library research). Data collection techniques involve studying literature and documentation of Tenas Effendy's writings on Malay Identity Principles. The data analysis technique used is content analysis. The research findings indicate that the values of children's character education in the Malay identity principles perspective of Tenas Effendy encompass eight aspects: religious character, honesty, hardworking nature, independence, responsibility, social concern, environmental awareness, and friendly/communicative nature. Therefore, implementing these noble values in children can help shape a strong foundation of character. This doesn't only prepare children for academic success but also builds a moral and ethical groundwork that will guide them in facing future challenges.

**Keywords:** Character Education Child, Principles of Self-Integrity, Malay.

### Introduction

The technological advancements in the current era of Society 5.0 pose a significant challenge for Generation Z (Gen Z) and the Post-Gen Z generation. To prepare them, especially the Post-Gen Z generation, born in 2013 and onwards, it is essential to develop characters such as awareness, responsibility, integrity, and morality within the education system. Character education holds immense significance for this generation (Alfikri, 2023). Education is where the shaping of a child's personality, behavior, attitude, and morals occurs (Mukhtar, 2020). Through this process, a generation with full awareness to achieve a harmonious existence for the nation will emerge. Achieving this goal requires instilling values in children that align with existing life values and norms (Sapdi, 2023). The character education values crucial in Society 5.0 encompass religious, nationalistic, self-reliance, mutual cooperation, and integrity values (Sukarno, 2020).

The character education values that need to be imparted to children in this era are rooted in Pancasila (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). These character education values have

long developed within Indonesian society, especially among the Malay community. It's widely known that Malay society's cultural system is heavily influenced by Islamic teachings and customs. The community regards Islam as the source of their customs, as expressed in the saying, "Customs are combined with Shariah, and Shariah is combined with the Book of Allah." This signifies that all rules governing customs must stem from religion (Sabakti, 2018). This expression also illustrates that Islam has become deeply integrated with the Malays, both in Riau and the Riau Archipelago. The influence of Islam on this culture is evident in the traditions, thoughts, and literature of the Malay community, especially in their distinctive characteristics (Zainuddin, 2018).

There are similar Malay expressions like the one above, stating, "Customs follow Shariah, Shariah follows the Book of Allah, customs are merely Shariah, customs are merely the Qur'an and Sunnah, true customs lie in the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet, Shariah directs, customs follow, yes, Shariah speaks the truth, customs stem from Shariah, Shariah stems from the Book of Allah, customs stand because of Shariah." This implies that all regulations governing customs should originate from the Quran and Sunnah because they are the sources of Islamic teachings. This expression is characteristic of the Malays because in another saying it's stated, "Whoever abandons Shariah leaves behind their Malayness, whoever adopts Shariah becomes a Malay." Or "If Shariah is abandoned, Malayness is lost" (Hasbi, n.d.). This reflects that Malay culture is deeply intertwined with Islamic law; all behavior in Malay society should adhere to Islamic teachings. Hence, there's a belief in Malay society that one isn't a true Malay if they don't abide by Islamic law.

The behaviors nurtured within Malay society form the character of that community. These behaviors are planned habits that shape an individual's personality (Marwiyati, 2020). A person's character isn't inherent but can be formed and influenced by people and their environment. Character education, in this sense, has the same meaning as moral and ethical education. Moral and character education are also referred to as "guidance" in Riau Malay culture. Guidance, in this context, includes all kinds of advice, instructions, beliefs, teachings, and examples that facilitate an individual's life (Tambak, 2018). Essentially, character education shapes a person's morals when executed simultaneously and integrally through family, the school environment, and the surrounding community (Budi Raharjo, 2010).

Riau and the Riau Archipelago, as provinces in Indonesia rich with Malay customs, contain various cultural aspects: arts, customary ceremonies, clothing, architecture, customary laws, and more (Arkas & Suryana, 2022). These cultures are crucial as they represent the identity of an individual or group, constituting a heritage that needs preservation. Culture also mirrors the character of an individual/group, forming the essence of that culture's identity (Selvi & Mukhtar, 2021). Just like the Malay language, Malay attire, traditional games, and distinctive characteristics are part of Malay culture and need to be preserved as part of its identity. According to Tenas Effendy, identity comprises the noble values inherent in someone, a group, tribe, or nation. It serves as a constant guideline and foundation reflected in one's behavior and attitude in their daily life (Effendi, 2004).

Several related studies, such as the research by (Jumadi, 2016) on the revitalization of Malay society's identity, emphasize the importance of maintaining the existence of values and culture to preserve the integrity and civilization of a nation. (Nurfalah, 2016) emphasizes the urgency of character education values. The researcher explains that character education can shape and build positive patterns, attitudes, and behaviors in children to become individuals of good character, noble morality, high principles, and responsibility. Character education guides individuals to become "insan kamil" (a complete human) rooted in religion, ethical norms,

regulations, or laws combined with local cultural values. (Khaironi, 2017) focuses on character education for early childhood, stating that it involves instilling commendable attitudes aligned with religious teachings, nationalism, community values, and the child's surrounding environment for their welfare. It requires continuity through habits, examples, advice, and reinforcement from an early age.

Similar sentiments are echoed in the research conducted by Zubaedah & Munawaroh regarding instilling character education values in early childhood based on the study of Quran Surah Luqman Verse 17. Their findings emphasize methods such as guidance through advising children to pray, enjoin what is good, forbid what is evil, and patience in facing trials. This method is effective within the family environment as the first school for a child and is also useful in the education sphere, particularly in Muslim families (Zubaedah & Munawaroh, 2020). Another relevant study by Puspitasari, et al. on the internalization of character education values in early childhood states that these values can be internalized through appropriate methods like exemplification, storytelling, and habituation (Puspitasari et al., 2023).

Considering the aforementioned studies, it's evident how crucial character education values are for early childhood development. However, these studies are still universal and not specific to the character education values evolving within the Malay community. Character education values within the Malay community are known as the foundation of identity. These values, along with identity within the Malay community, are instilled through what is referred to as the "guidance of the Malays" according to Tenas Effendy. Tenas Effendy, a renowned cultural figure from Riau, is highly proficient and familiar with Malay language arts and traditions. Therefore, the researcher aims to conduct a literature review focusing on analyzing the character education values in early childhood within the perspective of Malay identity foundation as articulated by Tenas Effendy.

## Literature Review

The definition of character/personality in the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) is the psychological traits, morals, or virtues that distinguish one person from another. Character, in this sense, can be referred to as a person's unique and excellent values, manifested in actions (Sudaryanti, 2015). Therefore, character education is the process of educating virtues, morals, or character. Character education is also referred to as moral education (Wiguna, I. B. A. A. & Sunariyadi, 2021). Character education can be divided into two categories: internal character education (at home) and external character education (school and society) (Wijayanti, 2021). Spiritual education (family) can be considered fundamental education. As stated by Rihlah, the home environment is the primary and most important educational environment for a child. This is because a child within this family receives education and guidance foremost (Rihlah et al., 2020).

The Malay community in Riau and the Riau Archipelago highly values character education within their homes. Therefore, the Riau and Riau Archipelago Malay communities refer to the concept of character education. This pattern is called "tunjuk ajar" (Marlina, 2020). Leadership in Riau Malay culture means providing directions, responsibilities, exemplary behavior, and guidance, leading people on the right path, pleasing God, and God's blessings save humans in this world and the hereafter. The noble values of Islam, culture, and prevailing social norms apply to the Malay community in Riau. As indicated by expressions such as "Religion shines in teaching" or "Various knowledge hidden within guidance" (Raudati & Adisaputera, 2017).

In the past, guidance related to the development of a child's character and moral attitudes was naturally conveyed orally from one generation to another. One of the guidance sources for character education for children is found in the book "Views of the Malays towards Children" (1990) by Tenas Effendy. Some topics discussed in this book include discussing the attitudes parents should have towards their children and the noble values instilled within them. This is particularly interesting as it relates to shaping a child's character in connection with customs and culture in Riau. The character education values taught in this book represent ideal character values from the perspective of the Riau Malay community (Raihaninur, 2019).

The character education values taught to children in the Malay Perspective on Children include religious values, loyalty to friends (mutual cooperation), self-confidence, work ethic, time management, and leadership. The book also illustrates the attitudes that parents should have towards their children: being attentive and loving, observing their growth and development, teaching discipline, granting them freedom, recognizing their interests and talents, managing emotions in raising children, and being genuinely committed to guiding their children (Hidayati et al., 2020). The moral values contained in this book are largely in line with the character education established by the government. Therefore, this book can be considered an alternative for character education for children, especially those in Riau. Research on character education based on Riau Malay culture has been conducted by researchers such as Alber in his study titled "Melayu Guidance in Poetry, Tenas Effendy's work as the Basis of Character Education." He states that the character education contained in Tenas Effendy's text comprises religious character education, social concern, discipline, honesty, independence, responsibility, peace-loving nature, tolerance, environmental care, kindness, democracy, perseverance, and curiosity (Alber, 2017).

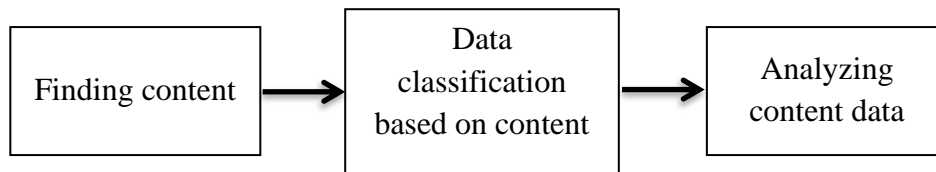
Research on Melayu Guidance has also been explored by Vera Sardila in her work titled "Semiotic Analysis of Melayu Guidance as an Approach to Understanding Meaning in Communication" (Sardila, 2016). Sardilla analyzed teaching texts using cultural, social, and structural semiotics. Her findings concluded that the Malay expressions contained within teaching materials phonologically signify that these expressions utilize ordinary characters structurally achieved through semiotic. Based on social semiotic analysis, it is concluded that Malays live together socially.

Yanti Sumarsih, Syahrul Ramadhan, and Auzar's study concluded that teaching related to devotion to the One Almighty God: 1) displays characteristics of traditional Malay poetry; 2) the religious education values contained within the Melayu Guidance manuscript are values that contain the Malay community's belief in Islam, such as belief in the One Almighty God, obedience to God's commands, gratitude, avoidance of prohibitions, trustworthiness, and sincerity (Sumarsih, 2014). The Riau Malay community believes that the success of parents in raising children is closely related to their attitudes towards their children. Riau Malays are an ethnic group with a strong tradition in building families. The ancestors of the Malay people not only stressed that children must obey their parents, but also that parents must be respectful towards their children. The essence of parenting refers to the tasks that parents must undertake for their children to grow up well in line with their culture (H. Putera, 2020).

## Methods

This study employs a type of research called library research. This method is utilized to identify literature related to the problem being investigated. The data sources that contribute directly and are relevant to the core issues examined in this study include primary and secondary sources. The primary sources used by the researcher are books or written works directly authored by the figures under examination, which discuss the issues pertinent to this research. The secondary sources in this study comprise books, journals, articles both in print and electronic media that are relevant in supporting this research, specifically those that discuss the values of character education in early childhood, as well as other data associated with Tenas Effendy.

This research falls under library research. Therefore, the technique used in data collection is documentation. The data analysis technique employed by the researcher involves reading and examining readings from books related to the values of character education in early childhood within the framework of Tenas Effendi's Malay identity. To obtain accurate and precise results in data analysis, the writer employs content analysis technique. To elaborate further, the steps of the content analysis technique are as follows.



## Result/Findings

The book entitled "Tunjuk Ajar Melayu" written by Tenas Effendi is fundamentally a work that elaborates on the principles that can serve as guidelines from the Riau Malay culture. This book explicitly explains that "Tunjuk Ajar Melayu" refers to advice, trustworthiness, behavioral norms, and guidance towards the right path, accepted by Allah, which has positive impacts in both worldly and afterlife realms. Structurally, the book is divided into three main parts: introduction, content, and conclusion. The introduction aims to provide readers with an understanding of the concept, content, position, and benefits of "Tunjuk Ajar Melayu." The author uses quotes and expressions as evidence and reinforcement of the explanations to elucidate the essence of "Tunjuk Ajar Melayu." The content section comprises two main topics: the essence of "Tunjuk Ajar" and Advice and Trustworthiness. The section discussing the essence of "Tunjuk Ajar" consists of 29 themes and 10 trustworthiness advice.

The message conveyed by the author in the book "Tunjuk Ajar Melayu" through the principles of "Tunjuk Ajar" essentially revolves around how to maintain human relations to be protected in both the worldly and afterlife realms through two aspects: the relationship with Allah and the relationship with fellow human beings (*hablumminallah wa hablumminannas*). Out of the 29 themes outlined by the author, only three major themes emphasize the relationship between humans and the Creator: instilling piety towards the One Almighty God, sincerity, and gratitude for the blessings of Allah. Other themes in the principles of "Tunjuk Ajar" aim to introduce readers to character values that can serve as a good way of life in human interactions, such as obedience to parents, obedience to leaders, unity, mutual cooperation, tolerance, and other aspects.

Another part of this book explains about Advice and Trustworthiness. The author explains that advice and trustworthiness are often given in various customary ceremonies,

traditions, and in daily life, including in everyday conversations or dialogues. In this section, there are ten themes of advice and trustworthiness outlined by the author, such as teachers' advice to students, parental advice to children, advice for family life, general advice, advice in educating and defending children, advice on social solidarity, advice for facing the future, advice in building a prosperous household, advice in leadership, and advice on environmental sustainability.

Religious Character refers to the attitudes and behaviors that adhere to the teachings of their embraced religion, respecting and tolerating other religious practices, and living peacefully with followers of other religions. Indications of adherence to religious teachings can be seen from the phrase, "What is the sign of a Malay tradition, Shar'iah held, Sunnah remembered. His heart is attached to Islam." Shar'iah is the law derived from Islamic teachings. This phrase reflects the religious character based on the customary teachings of the Malay people, following the religious teachings with guidance from the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. "So that life is not in vain, Do good throughout life. So that life is not wasted, Sit in remembrance, stand in prayer, So that life is not wasted, The purpose of life is to remember, So that life is not wasted, Remember the prohibitions and restrictions." This expression emphasizes that individuals who practice religion utilize their lives by performing worship acts such as remembrance and prayer while obeying God's commandments and avoiding His prohibitions. It also emphasizes the importance of preserving religious identity and adhering firmly to religious teachings.

Moreover, religious character in practicing religion is also reflected in the phrase, "The life of a believer, Depends on God. The identity as a guide," indicating submission to Allah in every situation. The phrase "The life of a Malay tradition, Works according to the Shar'iah," indicates that work should be done following Islamic principles, not violating rules, and benefiting others. Honesty in work is also an important teaching in Islam. In the context of hard work in a religious aspect, it means maximizing worship for the afterlife and striving hard to achieve a prosperous life in this world. The last expression, "The life of a Malay tradition, Show respect to fellow humans, Give and take become traits," affirms tolerance towards other religions and a harmonious attitude towards followers of other religions. Establishing true intentions in interaction will form brotherhood. At the elementary school level, religious character is manifested when children appreciate the practice of other religions, remind each other to be obedient to religious teachings, and fight for truth without discriminating against religion when acting as witnesses.

Honest character is an attribute and behavior rooted in an individual's effort to always be trustworthy in words, actions, and work. The formation of honest character in students can be realized through school culture using four approaches: setting an example, spontaneous activities, routine activities, and environmental arrangements. Setting an example given by teachers and educational staff includes exemplary habits, such as providing objective assessments and fulfilling promises to students. Spontaneous activities, as the second example, are carried out directly when the incident occurs by teachers and educational staff, such as warning students who cheat during exams. Routine activities in school also play a role in shaping honest character, such as providing a place to deposit lost items, financial transparency in school reports, providing suggestion and complaint boxes, and prohibiting cheating during exams. Environmental arrangement, as the fourth approach, is done in schools by creating conditions that support character formation, such as creating an Honest Canteen. With this honest canteen, schools teach students to have faith in Allah that every action is under His supervision. Honest

behavior has positive impacts on an individual's life and brings happiness and safety in both the worldly and afterlife realms.

The character of hard work refers to behavior that shows genuine dedication in overcoming learning challenges, completing tasks, and doing work to the fullest. Expressions such as "The sign of a true Malay, Works hard wherever they are. The sign of a true Malay, Works diligently until death. The sign of a true Malay, Works without waiting," describe the values contained in the character of hard work based on that message, namely doing work anywhere, as long as it is done with dedication and wholeheartedly. Work done wholeheartedly reflects a strong spirit. The character of hard work is behavior that shows professionalism, knowledge, and sincerity in working. This view indicates that individuals with a strong work ethic tend to prioritize professionalism, expertise, and dedication in carrying out their tasks.

Statement, "If you want to reign, Beautify work. If you want to take the lead, Work with understanding. If you want to be respected, Lighten the load. If you want to be famous, Don't disregard sweat," emphasizes that through hard work, one can achieve success in the future. These earnest efforts not only make life better but also bring success in the future. Furthermore, the expression "Careful work brings blessings, Thrifty work brings benefits," confirms that hard work is not just about skills, professionalism, and dedication but also about receiving blessings from the Almighty God and benefiting oneself, family, and others.

Independence character is an attitude and behavior that shows self-reliance when completing tasks without depending on others. The phrase "What is the sign of a true Malay, Stand on your own feet" depicts an independent character capable of standing without relying on others. Another phrase that reinforces independent character is "What is the sign of a true Malay, He does not live by relying on others. What is the sign of a true Malay, Belief in one's own abilities," indicating that independent individuals will have belief, optimism, and adequate competence. With strong belief, great hope, and possessed abilities, individuals can achieve their desired goals.

Another expression, "What is the sign of a person with good morals, Standing on their own feet, Facing bitterness and pain, Avoiding others' help, Avoiding pity, Obeying trustworthy advice, Facing enemies without fleeing," affirms that independent character is marked by self-reliance based on belief, dedication, and courage in facing challenges. Independent individuals will follow good advice and bravely confront all obstacles and trials.

Responsibility character is an individual's behavior and attitude in fulfilling tasks and duties towards oneself, society, and the environment according to what should be done. Tunjuk Ajar essentially encourages individuals to use intellect and conscience to fulfill Allah's trust and carry out their duties as part of family, society, nation, and country. This awareness makes individuals responsible for themselves, understanding the burden imposed, and realizing the obligations that must be fulfilled.

This consciousness also develops a mindset that looks forward with broad insights and is capable of reflecting on the past. The task given becomes a trust that must be upheld and performed well, it cannot be abandoned or disregarded, especially until the end of life.

This message is expressed in the phrase "What is the sign of a true Malay, No day without responsibility. Responsible from center to edge. Shunning responsibility, he abhors." The Islamic teachings forming the basis of Malay culture remind that humans, as chosen beings of Allah, possess intellect and conscience and are given the responsibility as 'khalifah' to maintain a physically and spiritually peaceful, prosperous life. The responsibility given to an individual is a trust that must be upheld until the event of death.

The character of social concern is an attitude and actions aimed at assisting other individuals and communities in need. In Malay cultural teachings, the character of social concern is reflected in the principle of "Petuah Amanah Kesetiakawanan Sosial." "Mutual creatures filled with compassion, Burdens carried and shared alike, Where wrongs are balanced, Where rights are held, Towards the high, respect is shown, For the low, remembrance is held. The suffering is to be borne together," is a depiction of social concern behavior that emphasizes caring for fellow human beings regardless of differences in race, ethnicity, or religion. Traits such as affection and compassion should be an integral part of human nature.

The importance of Malays' concern for others is reflected in their desire to provide assistance to other individuals and communities in need. Social concern is based on empathy for the shortcomings and needs of others, as well as the spirit of mutual aid, as expressed in the adage of life, "sharing burdens equally and lending a hand to ease each other's burdens." This character of social concern takes root in religious law and local customs that encourage doing good to others with a caring attitude.

The character of environmental concern is an attitude and effort that continually focuses on preventing environmental damage in its surrounding natural environment and initiating steps to rectify the damage that has occurred. In Malay cultural teachings, evidence of environmental concern is reflected in the teaching of "Petuah Amanah Alam Lingkungan." One of the teachings states, "A sign of adhering to customs, Nature is preserved, teachings remembered, Never destroy forests and land. A sign of holding trust, Prudence in dealing with nature, Nurturing a sturdy heart for the environment." This explains that nature is a gift from God and serves as the abode for humans, which must be safeguarded to remain intact. The heritage from past generations that consistently preserved the environment by refraining from damaging forests and land, and using natural resources carefully, allows us to enjoy nature until today.

Efforts to refrain from damaging forests and land and preserving the environment should be instilled in the minds of children from an early age to create an environmentally conscious character. When this understanding is embedded in every child's soul, the results can have a positive impact, such as a safer life from natural disasters like landslides, floods, and the impacts of global warming. Moreover, it will bring blessings and pleasures to human life because a well-preserved environment holds various benefits and valuable cultural teachings.

The character of being friendly or communicative is an action that shows pleasure in speaking, socializing, and collaborating with others. In cultivating friendships, one needs to pay attention to words and actions to ensure friends feel comfortable in their presence. In communicating and socializing, individuals should follow principles of benefit and ethics. Communicating with a teacher (a knowledgeable person) to gain knowledge, interacting with parents to receive advice, guidance, and affection, and relating with peers to strengthen bonds.

In communication, it's essential to maintain words and actions to strengthen friendships, reinforce family ties, and enhance relationships with neighbors. This is reflected in the expression "Not just looking up, not just praising for receiving, not just flattering for position. The weak should not be oppressed, the defeated should not be scorned, relatives should not be belittled, friends should not be deceived, neighbors should not be insulted." "If seated in agreement, Maintain virtues, refine your nature. Mind your steps, refine your stride. Guard your words, refine your conduct. If amongst many, Maintain your demeanor, refine your character." Essentially, this emphasizes that in a meeting or discussion, communication should be conducted with polite words and uphold ethics while maintaining behavior to avoid offending others. In the relationship between children and parents or those who are older, the use of words



that reflect respect and esteem is crucial. Furthermore, apologizing for mistakes is also a part of a friendly and good communication attitude.

## Discussion

The Malay community, in general, still holds firmly to existing customs and traditions. This is because these traditions have become customary and deeply ingrained in communal life. Customs are formed based on human habits continuously practiced since ancient times. Essentially, customs encompass norms and values that shape human behavior. The customs within Malay society stem from Islamic law, namely the Quran and Hadith. These two sources serve as guidance for Malays in their way of life.

Based on research, it has been found that the character revealed in the book "Tunjuk Ajar Melayu" by Tenas Effendy highlights religious character predominantly, followed by responsibility, honesty, environmental concern, hard work, independence, social concern, as well as the ability to be friendly and communicative. Therefore, in this analysis, the characters found in this book that can be applied to elementary school children will be comprehensively outlined. Character education plays a crucial role in shaping the characters of elementary school children because at this stage, they are not yet familiar with negative characteristics from earlier stages.

Religious character, which is the main character apparent in the book "Tunjuk Ajar Melayu," shows that religious character serves as a foundation for every individual as it pertains to their relationship with the Creator. Religious character in children can be formed through the culture within the school environment, utilizing four approaches: habituation through exemplification, spontaneous habituation, routine habituation, and conditioning (Nurgiansah, 2022). First, habituation (Ahsanulhaq, 2019) through exemplification is carried out in elementary schools by teachers and educational staff, such as praying together before and after lessons and demonstrating a respectful attitude in prayer, which can be followed by children with devotion using easily understandable language. Second, through spontaneous habituation, teachers and educational staff in elementary schools give reminders to children who do not perform religious practices or do not greet with salutations. Third, through routine habituation (Nurbaiti et al., 2020) in school, such as engaging in daily prayers before and after lessons, donation activities every Friday, greetings between students and teachers at the start of lessons, as well as performing Duha prayers (Aprilia & Sajari, 2022), congregational Zuhur prayers according to the specified schedule. Fourth, conditioning, where the school supports character education and the nation's culture by providing adequate ablution facilities (Erlanda et al., 2021) and prayer rooms for students. The support from the school is expected to assist in shaping religious character in children.

Honesty is a behavior rooted in a strong desire to always be a trustworthy individual in speech, actions, and work. Character education in honesty among students will be formed through habits built in the school environment, employing four approaches: exemplification, spontaneity, routines, and conditioning. Exemplification is taught by teachers and educational staff by providing objective assessments and keeping promises to students. Spontaneous habits involve prompt actions, such as warning students who cheat during exams. School routines encompass daily actions, like finding lost items, transparency in school financial reports, providing a space for suggestions and complaints, and prohibiting cheating during exams. Meanwhile, conditioning is done by creating an environment supporting character education, such as the existence of an Honest Cafeteria (Andriani & Angelia, 2023), teaching honesty as

part of faith in God's oversight. Honest behavior has a positive impact on an individual's life, bringing happiness and security both in this world and the afterlife.

The attitude of honesty is a quality that will steer this nation towards progress. In the context of shaping children's characters, honesty is immensely crucial as they are the future builders. Presently, what our nation needs are not only academically intelligent students but also those with good personalities. To achieve this, character education should encompass all aspects, like understanding what is good, a genuine desire for good things, and the practice of good things (Ansori, 2021). Parents play a vital role in nurturing honesty in young children (Nur Pitaloka et al., 2022)..

The character of hard work refers to behavior that shows genuine effort in overcoming learning obstacles, tasks, and completing work with dedication (Marzuki & Hakim, 2019). This trait cannot be obtained instantly but requires continuous practice. In elementary school children, the character of hard work can be observed through perseverance in the learning process (Alfiana, 2021), focus on acquiring knowledge, completing homework or tasks within the given time frame, and working on school assignments independently (Cahyani et al., 2020).

Independence characterizes one's ability to face various challenges wisely, with courage, self-confidence, and a strong determination to achieve goals (Fadilah et al., 2021). It also teaches community members to free themselves from dependency on others. In young children, independence is reflected in their behavior while doing exercises or tasks in class, where independent ones will complete their tasks on their own (Dwi Rita Nova & Widiastuti, 2019). Developing this independent character reduces the often-seen spoiled behavior in children. Parents also play a role in instilling independence in children (Misnan et al., 2021).

Responsibility character refers to an individual's attitude in fulfilling duties and obligations towards oneself, the environment, and the Almighty (Afiatun Putri, 2022). This character is essential for all individuals. By possessing a sense of responsibility, one gains a respected position and avoids hypocritical behavior, which is considered the most disgraceful. In young children, responsibility can be seen in their obedience to rules and regulations in any environment they are in, as well as their readiness to accept the consequences of their mistakes (Fidiawati & Fitriani, 2021). Responsibility can be cultivated through traditional games (Kusmiati et al., 2019). The use of audiovisual media significantly influences the cultivation of a sense of responsibility in young children (Cahyati, 2018).

The character of social concern refers to behavior and attitude that prioritize the desire to assist individuals and communities in need, irrespective of racial, ethnic, religious, or personal interests (Tabi'in, 2017). In early childhood, social concern can be fostered through three approaches in the school environment: exemplification, spontaneity, routines, and conditioning. Firstly, through exemplification, such as teachers and educational staff gathering contributions during internal calamities or natural disasters for social activities (Deva & Putri, 2022). Secondly, through spontaneous actions like visiting an ailing friend, providing support during a parent or other person's mourning, collecting donations to aid disaster victims, and forming a donation collection leader in each class. Thirdly, through routine activities at school, such as visiting nursing homes, providing aid to orphans, collecting donations at specific times, or assisting friends who experience misfortune (Purwaningrum, 2018).

Environmental concern characterizes an individual's behavior and disposition aimed at preserving, utilizing, and preventing damage to their surrounding environment (Sakman & Syam, 2020). In early childhood, this character can be developed through four approaches implemented in the school culture. Firstly, through exemplification, the actions of teachers and educational staff in disposing of trash properly, conducting joint clean-up activities with

students to clean the school, and picking up litter (Naziyah et al., 2021). Secondly, through spontaneous actions by encouraging students to pick up improperly discarded garbage and imposing sanctions on those who do so. Thirdly, through routine practices at school, such as teaching children to dispose of trash properly (Masykuroh & Khairunnisa, 2022), holding class duties, and conducting regular clean-up activities. Fourthly, through environmental conditioning provided by the school to support character education (Ismail, 2021), such as maintaining cleanliness in toilets, providing trash bins, and greening the premises by planting trees or plants.

Communicative or friendly character is a behavior that displays enjoyment in communicating, socializing, and cooperating with others (Dewi Niswatul Fithriyah et al., 2023). In early childhood, this character is reflected in behaviors such as apologizing when making mistakes, showing respect to elders, interacting with friends regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, or other differences. Children with communicative/friendly traits will have many friends (Mayar et al., 2022) due to their amiable nature in befriending others. This character also fosters transparency in children. Those with communicative/friendly traits will easily adapt to any environment they are in (Sriyahani et al., 2022) (Devianty, 2019).

## Conclusion

The values of character education in the Riau Malay community culture are related to moral education or moral values. The concept of character education in Malay culture is embodied in the form of "tunjuk ajar" (guidance and teachings). Through the analysis of the noble values that parents must impart to their children, several characters of character education are depicted, namely religious character, honesty, hardworking character, independence, responsibility, social concern, environmental concern, and friendly/communication character. These eight values are conveyed in expressions that represent the distinctive features of Malay culture rooted in customs, traditions, and Islamic teachings.

The religious value present in the "Tunjuk Ajar Melayu" book is more prominent because religion has a close connection with the Malay identity rooted in Islamic values. Malays align worldly interests with spiritual interests, integrating knowledge about the world with religious knowledge. This is expected to shape children's characters into holistic individuals, both outwardly and inwardly, due to the religious aspects inherent in Malay life. Since Islam has become an integral part of Malay life, educating children about recognizing, appreciating, obeying, and practicing Islamic teachings begins at an early age. Researchers recommend continuing this study with a theme focusing on developing specific curriculum materials that emphasize the introduction and reinforcement of Malay character values during early childhood development stages.

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