

# Social Moral Values in the Ka'aik Nari Coming-of-Age Ritual as a Source of Cultural and Civic Literacy for Elementary School Students

Atika Susanti

Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, Universitas Bengkulu, Bengkulu, Indonesia

\*Corresponding author, email: atikasusanti@unib.ac.id

## Keywords

Social Moral Values, Cultural Literacy, Civic Literacy, Elementary School, Ethnopedagogy

## Abstract

This research is motivated by the limited utilization of local culture as a learning resource in elementary schools, particularly in developing cultural and civic literacy. The aim of this study is to describe the social moral values embedded in the *Pengantin Kecil Ka'aik Nari* ritual and to explain how these values can be utilized as a learning source for cultural and civic literacy among elementary school students. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The findings reveal that this ritual involves a series of meaningful symbolic and spiritual activities, including ritual bathing, traditional dancing, and other customary ceremonies. The *Pengantin Kecil Ka'aik Nari* ritual contains a range of social moral values, such as respect for parents, mutual cooperation, social responsibility, and empathy for others. These values can be applied in the learning process through contextual approaches that actively engage students in culturally-based activities. Culture-based value education can enhance students' understanding of social life in their community and foster civic attitudes as responsible citizens. The conclusion of this research indicates that the *Pengantin Kecil Ka'aik Nari* ritual has significant potential as a learning resource for developing cultural and civic literacy in elementary education.

## 1. Introduction

Character education and civic learning at the elementary school level play a highly strategic role in shaping children's personalities and social attitudes from an early age. According to Lickona (1991), character education focuses on the development of moral and ethical values that underlie positive behavior in everyday life. In addition, Banks (2008) states that civic education aims to foster awareness and active participation in community, national, and global life. These two aspects must be taught from an early age so that children can internalize the values deeply and develop responsible thinking and behavior.

Social moral values such as respect, honesty, responsibility, cooperation, and social empathy are fundamental principles that must be instilled in elementary school children (Rahmawati et al., 2024). However, the cultivation of these values cannot be separated from the cultural context in which children grow and develop. As emphasized by Gay (2010) contextual and culturally responsive teaching can strengthen students' understanding and emotional connection to the values being taught, as those values are already embedded in their everyday lives.

The use of local culture as a source of learning offers numerous benefits. A study by Govender & Mudzamiri (2022), which examined culturally-based learning in elementary schools, found that integrating local culture into the curriculum can increase students' motivation, strengthen cultural identity, and foster positive attitudes toward other community members. Similarly, research by Cress et al. (2023), learning based on local wisdom helps students understand civic values more authentically and contextually, resulting in more active and responsible social behavior.

Local culture is highly diverse and rich in noble values that can serve as essential sources for character and civic education (Epiphanis et al., 2024). This is supported by Rasidi & Istiningasih (2025), who stated that learning based on local wisdom in elementary schools can holistically develop students' character by integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Additionally, cultural literacy developed through local sources can foster pride in one's own culture while also cultivating tolerance and respect for differences (Arvizu & Saravia-Shore, 2017; Fatmawati, 2021). Despite the recognized importance of using local culture as a learning resource, in practice, the integration of local cultural values into the teaching and learning process in many elementary schools remains suboptimal. This is partly due to national curricula and teaching materials that tend to be general and emphasize national standards without providing enough

space to accommodate the richness of local wisdom in students' surroundings (Sleeter & Carmona, 2017; Tohri et al., 2022). One consequence of this lack of integration is less contextual learning. According to Munna & Kalam (2021), effective learning should be able to relate the lesson content to students' real-life experiences and environments so that the learning process becomes more meaningful and applicable to daily life. Phinla & Mahapoonyanont (2024), without integrating local cultural values, students may struggle to connect school lessons with their social and cultural realities in the community.

Research by Pak et al., (2020) shows that a curriculum that is too standardized and fails to accommodate local contexts can lead students to perceive learning as irrelevant and unengaging. As a result, they tend to lose motivation and active involvement in the learning process. This indicates the need for curriculum adaptation to become more responsive to students' local cultural contexts, especially at the elementary school level, where the formation of identity and social values is occurring intensively. Furthermore, a study by Gay (2015) emphasized that although teachers often possess knowledge of local culture, they frequently face challenges in integrating that culture into formal education due to a lack of supporting teaching materials and insufficient support from educational policies. Teachers also often struggle to align local cultural values with the rigid and uniform national curriculum standards.

Research conducted by Rachman & Zulfatussoraya (2024) in Indonesia revealed that the integration of local cultural values into education has not been optimal, largely due to limited resources, inadequate teacher training, and the lack of culturally relevant teaching materials. As a result, learning experiences often feel disconnected from students' cultural backgrounds, making them less effective in fostering authentic and contextual civic values. In response to these challenges, Susanti & Kurniawati (2025) suggested that teachers should develop more culturally-based learning strategies to strengthen the connection between subject matter and students' everyday lives, thereby addressing the gap between learning expectations and classroom realities. Supporting this perspective, Ariffiando et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of consistently implementing culturally-based learning through the Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) approach to shape students' character, reinforce cultural identity, and promote tolerance and appreciation for diversity from an early age.

The theoretical foundation of ethnopedagogy provides a strong basis for understanding the importance of local cultural roots in the educational process. According to Mursalim et al., (2025), ethnopedagogy emphasizes the use of local wisdom as a learning source that is not only relevant to students' sociocultural contexts but also capable of creating more contextual and meaningful learning experiences. Westheimer & Ladson-Billings (2024), by grounding education in local culture, the learning process can strengthen children's cultural identity while developing their cultural and civic literacy in alignment with community values.

This ethnopedagogical approach aligns with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum and the Profile of Pancasila Students, which emphasize strengthening students' character based on local cultural values. According to Ahmar & Azzajjad (2025), integrating local wisdom into the curriculum helps students understand the nation's identity and fosters social responsibility, mutual cooperation, and respect for cultural diversity. This demonstrates that the integration of local culture in education is not merely supplementary, but an essential component in shaping a dignified and character-driven generation. In line with this, research by Darmawati & Parinduri (2025), reveals that using traditional rituals as learning media is effective in enhancing cultural awareness and civic values among elementary school students. Uge et al. (2019) stated that learning based on local wisdom is an effort to regenerate knowledge of local wisdom values in students from an early age, so that they become cultured individuals with guidance in their attitudes. They argue that through local culture-based learning processes, students can more easily grasp the concept of citizenship directly from their own cultural experiences, making social and moral values more deeply ingrained and long-lasting. Therefore, Palak Siring Village and the *Pengantin Kecik Ka'aik Nari* ritual can serve as rich sources of learning for social moral and civic values. An ethnopedagogical approach that integrates this tradition into elementary education is highly relevant for shaping children who are not only academically capable but also culturally aware and socially responsible.

The research on Social Moral Values in the *Ka'aik Nari* Wedding Ritual as a Source of Cultural and Civic Literacy for Elementary School Students is supported by several previous studies that highlight the importance of integrating cultural values into elementary education. Aulia & Susanti (2021) emphasized the role of multicultural education in shaping the character of elementary school students, particularly by introducing cultural diversity from an early age. Furthermore,

Susanti et al. (2022) demonstrated that cultural and civic literacy activities based on the School Literacy Movement (GLS) can be effectively implemented in elementary schools to foster students' awareness of national values and local wisdom. In addition, Susanti et al. (2023) stated that literacy products designed with a multicultural approach can serve as effective materials to promote multicultural education among fourth-grade students. In terms of educational media development, Ariffiando & Susanti (2024) created the foldable comic "*Tabot Bengkulu*" as a tool to enhance students' cultural and civic literacy. Therefore, incorporating the social moral values found in the Ka'aik Nari wedding ritual is highly relevant as a source of cultural and civic literacy, as it not only strengthens students' local identity but also helps shape their character for responsible participation in society.

The aim of this study is to identify the social moral values embedded in the ritual of *Pengantin Kecik Ka'aik Nari* and to explore how these values can be utilized as a source for cultural and civic literacy learning among elementary school students. These research questions are essential to address in order to provide an alternative learning approach that is more contextual and effective.

## 2. Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the social moral values embedded in the *Pengantin Kecik Ka'aik Nari* ritual and how these values can be utilized as a source of cultural and civic literacy learning for elementary school students. The research was conducted at SDN 69 Bengkulu Selatan and in the village of Palak Siring, Kedurang District, South Bengkulu, where the ritual is still actively preserved and regularly practiced by the local community.

The research subjects included traditional leaders who officiate the ritual, elementary school teachers, and students with direct experience or exposure to the local cultural practice. Data were collected through participatory observation by directly attending the ritual to observe the process, emerging values, social interactions, and the cultural context in a holistic and contextual manner. In-depth interviews were also conducted with traditional leaders, teachers, and students to explore the social moral values within the ritual and their potential application in school-based learning. Supporting data were gathered through documentation such as photographs, video recordings, and written field notes.

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques, which included data reduction to select relevant information, data presentation in narrative and tabular form to facilitate interpretation, and drawing conclusions based on the correlation between cultural values and their potential use in character education and civic literacy. To ensure data validity, this study applied source and technique triangulation by cross-checking information obtained from multiple informants and data collection methods.

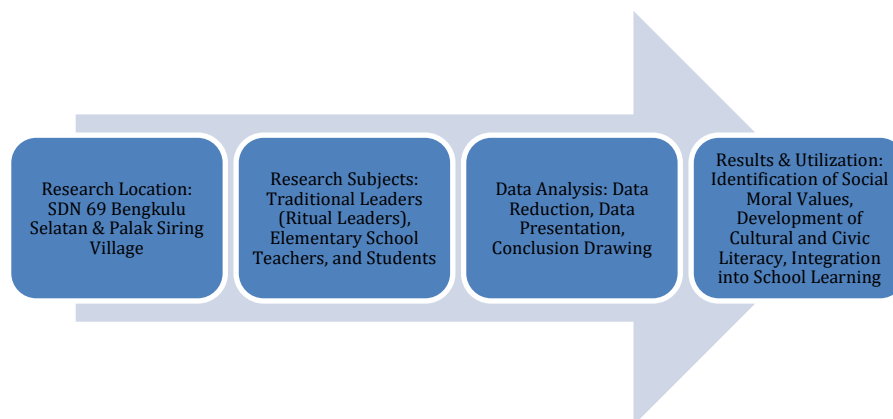


Figure 1. Research Flowchart

## 3. Results and Discussion

*Ka'aik Nari* is a traditional custom of the Serawai ethnic group, particularly practiced in the South Bengkulu region of Indonesia. It signifies the transition of a girl into adolescence, marking the onset of puberty, and is also associated with female circumcision or sunat. This cultural ritual is typically performed for girls between the ages of 5 and 12 and consists of various ceremonial

stages, including ritual bathing, dancing, and other customary practices. The term "*Ka'aik Nari*" is derived from two words: *ka'aik*, referring to the ritual bathing procession usually performed at a river or, in its absence, a well; and *nari*, referring to the dance element of the ceremony. The preparation for the ritual includes several symbolic items such as sacred water mixed with lime juice, full bridal attire and jewelry for the girl, two woven pandan mats arranged in a cross shape, a young coconut shoot (less than one meter tall), a small rooster, and yellow rice (mixed with turmeric) presented in a special container.

Palak Siring Village, located in Kedurang District, South Bengkulu Regency, is one of the regions known for preserving this unique cultural heritage. Among its most distinctive traditions is the *Pengantin Keciak Ka'aik Nari* ritual. More than a ceremonial practice passed down through generations, this tradition is rich in moral and social values that serve as guidance for daily behavior and community norms. These include respect for parents and elders, cooperation (gotong royong), social responsibility, and empathy for others. The girl undergoing the ritual participates in a series of symbolic acts most notably the *ke'aik* (bathing) and *nari* (dancing) which together give the tradition its name. Each component of the ritual, from the materials used to the procedures followed, carries deep cultural significance, although many community members today are not fully aware of the meanings embedded in these symbols.

The exact historical origins of *Ka'aik Nari* remain unclear due to the absence of written records; the tradition has been passed down orally across generations. It is believed to date back to ancient times and may have originated from non-theistic spiritual practices. However, with the arrival of Islam in the region, the ritual has gradually evolved. Today, it is seen as a local expression of a prophetic tradition (sunnah) in the form of female circumcision, symbolizing a girl's passage into womanhood. In the procession, the girl called *pengantin keciak* (little bride) is taken to the river (or other major water sources) wearing a wet cloth. This procession is guided by a *dukun beranak* (traditional midwife), an elder woman who previously assisted in the girl's birth. Upon arriving at the river, the girl is allowed to bathe by herself first according to her wish. Afterward, she is asked to sit on a stone and then is symbolically bathed by the midwife. During the bathing process, the midwife recites a prayer or mantra that goes:

"Ya Allah ya Tuhanku, semoga anak ini cepat besar, menjadi anak yang soleha, dan mampu menjaga dirinya."

("O Allah, my Lord, may this child grow quickly, become a pious child, and be able to protect herself.").

After the prayer, the girl is wiped with the sacred water made from lime juice as a form of purification. After the bathing ritual is complete, she is taken to a nearby house to change clothes and be adorned like a bride. She wears traditional attire complete with *tajuak* (a bridal head ornament). In her hair bun, symbolic leaves such as betel leaves, banyan leaves, and *sedingin* leaves are inserted, each carrying philosophical meanings. Once the makeup and dressing are finished, a messenger is sent to notify the *sepokok rumah* or *tua kerja* (the customary event leader) that the little bride has finished the bathing procession and is ready for the next stage. Shortly after, a *rebana* (traditional drum) group arrives to escort the little bride and her entourage. The girl is then ceremoniously paraded to the main event house to continue the subsequent procession.



**Figure 2. The Procession of the Little Brides Toward the Ka'aik Nari Ritual Site**

The *Ka'aik Nari* ritual procession begins with a group of young girls, called the little brides, heading to the ritual site located at the river. In this image, the orderly and meaningful formation of the procession towards the main ritual location is clearly visible. The little brides wear traditional South Bengkulu attire rich in symbolism: velvet fabric adorned with intricate patterns, shawls, jewelry made of beads and metal, and head ornaments. These costumes are not merely decorative but reflect cultural identity and the sacred value of women in the local tradition. The girls do not walk alone; they are accompanied by adult women mothers, older sisters, and female adat leaders who serve as guides and protectors throughout the procession.

Symbolically, the journey to the ritual site represents a passage into cultural maturity. The children are not merely performing a traditional ceremony but are being "brought into" the circle of community values and norms. This is part of the internalization process, where the little brides directly absorb social ethics. *Ka'aik Nari* acts as an educational medium, an expression of gratitude, a social norm control tool, and carries symbolic meaning. From a cultural research perspective, a key finding of this stage is that females, from an early age, are positioned as guardians of social and cultural values, and *Ka'aik Nari* serves as the medium of such cultural transmission.

This procession illustrates how the adat community shapes its younger generation through ritual structures and symbolism, not merely verbal teaching. Furthermore, the collective involvement of nuclear families, neighbors, and the wider community indicates that this ritual is not the possession of individuals or families alone, but a communal heritage. This reinforces the meaning of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), social responsibility, and the spirit of togetherness.



**Figure 3. The Procession of the Little Brides Arriving at the Ka'aik Nari Ritual Site**

After a journey filled with meaning and symbolism, the procession of the Little Brides finally arrives at the main site of the Ka'aik Nari ritual. This ritual location is usually at a river, which has been specially prepared by the community. The site serves not only as a physical space for the ceremony but also as a symbolic space representing the meeting point between spiritual and social elements within the adat (customary) community. The river is believed to be a purifying element and a bridge between the physical world and the noble values inherited from ancestors. Upon arrival at this site, a customary dialogue known as symbolic advice takes place. This dialogue is conveyed in the local language, rich with cultural metaphors, allegories, and ethical values. The interaction between the procession group and the host occurs in a respectful and meaningful atmosphere. Every gesture and expression in this dialogue carries deep cultural connotations—for example, bowing the head and hand positions during the welcoming reflect respect, openness, and unity of intention or spirit.

One of the most important stages of this moment is the offering of traditional gifts by the Little Brides' group. These offerings may include traditional food, agricultural produce, and symbolic objects such as betel leaves and areca nuts, traditional cloth, or jewelry. The act of presenting these offerings carries profound meaning, not only as a form of respect to the hosts and ancestors but also as symbolic communication between humans, ancestral spirits, and the social community. This act reflects humility and sincere intention to establish and strengthen social harmony.

From a cultural perspective, this stage demonstrates the high regard for values and social ethics in the ritual's execution. The relationship between both parties is built on equality and mutual respect, with no sense of superiority. On the contrary, this ritual highlights the strong values of politeness, deliberation, openness, and social harmony that have been inherited and preserved by the adat community to this day.



**Figure 4. The Procession of the Little Brides Returning Home**

After the entire series of Ka'aik Nari ritual ceremonies is completed at the main ritual site, the procession of the Little Brides, accompanied by family and relatives, returns home in a more relaxed yet still solemn atmosphere. This stage is not merely a physical journey back to their place of origin but a symbolic journey marking the completion of the purification process and acceptance of adat (customary) values by the Little Brides. In the view of the adat community, girls who have undergone the Ka'aik Nari ceremony are considered to have been officially introduced to the adat community as individuals ready to understand social values, ethics, and traditional norms. Therefore, their return home is not as ordinary children but as those who have undergone a symbolic and spiritual cultural education process.

During the return journey, the atmosphere becomes lighter because the sacred tension of the main ritual has ended. Nevertheless, respect for adat values remains evident, reflected in unchanged attire, calm and orderly body language, and the entire procession's respectful demeanor towards the ritual they have just experienced. This demonstrates that in the adat community, sacred rites do not end at the peak of the ceremony but continue in behavior and self-presentation.

The return of the Little Brides also symbolizes that they have been culturally "purified." Purification here is not only spiritual but also social, as they have undergone a learning process about values primarily concerning manners, discipline, gender awareness, and respect for adat. Returning home means returning to everyday life with a new identity as an active part of the adat community. Socially, this stage also strengthens the family's role as a cultural preservation unit. Families are responsible for continuing the education of values, guiding the child so that the values instilled during the ritual do not remain mere symbols but become part of daily life. Here lies the continuity between ritual and cultural practice. Upon arrival at the home where the main event is held, the tua kerja (adat leader) announces their arrival and prepares for the dance procession. Two pandan leaf mats are laid out, forming a plus (+) sign. In the center of the mats is placed a young coconut shoot, which serves as the axis of the dance procession. This coconut shoot symbolizes the hope that the child undergoing the *Kayik Nari* ritual will grow healthy and beneficial to many people, just like the coconut tree, whose every part can be used.

Once everything is ready, the Little Brides along with their peers perform the Andun dance, a traditional group dance circling around the coconut shoot. In this procession, the dukun beranak (traditional birth attendant) also dances alongside the Little Brides, holding an umbrella and several ten-thousand-rupiah bills. The umbrella symbolizes protection, while the money reflects the hope that the child will be blessed with fortune. The presence of the dancers following the Little Brides also carries symbolic meaning, namely that the child is expected to become a role model for the community in the future.



**Figure 5. The Procession of the Little Brides Performing the Andun Dance**

As the closing of the entire series of the Little Brides Ka'aik Nari ritual, the Andun dance is performed a traditional dance unique to the South Bengkulu community, rich with meaning. This dance is performed by the procession of the Little Brides, their extended families, and community members who attend the ceremony. The dance is not merely entertainment but a collective expression of joy, gratitude, and social unity. The Andun dance is characterized by rhythmic movements performed in pairs or groups forming a circle, accompanied by traditional music and local chants. The dancers, including the Little Brides, display graceful yet spirited hand and foot movements, reflecting positive energy and a spirit of togetherness. The participation of all community members men, women, young, and old represents inclusive social involvement in local culture.

The Andun dance during the *Kayik Nari* ritual is accompanied by traditional instruments such as the *kelintang* and *redap*. The dance movements in this ritual slightly differ from the Andun usually performed at adat Gegerit Bimbang ceremonies. The sequence of movements includes: *naup - mbuka - nyentang - nyengkeling*, then repeated with *naup - mbuka*. The dance is performed in seven rounds circling the coconut shoot. On the seventh round, the mother of the Little Bride scatters yellow rice rice mixed with turmeric as a symbol of blessing. If the hosting family is economically capable, the ceremony is also accompanied by the scattering of small coins, symbolizing the spirit of sharing wealth with others. After the dance procession ends, the Little Brides and their peers are guided by the *dukun beranak* into the house to enjoy cakes and refreshments. Meanwhile, the guests continue with the *Buantagh* feast served outdoors (*belabar*). Before the meal begins, special prayers are offered for the well-being of the Little Brides.

After hosting their friends, the Little Brides also joined the other guests to enjoy the communal meal together. Once the entire series of rituals was complete, the bridal adornments worn by the Little Brides were removed. The betel leaves and banyan leaves that had been tucked into the hair bun were then placed on the center of the house's door. These leaves were left to dry naturally, symbolizing that the child who has undergone the *Kayik Nari* ceremony would always have a calm heart, behave kindly, and be granted good health throughout their life. With the completion of all stages of the *Kayik Nari* ritual, it marks that the girl is considered ready to join and interact with older people. Socially, she is also regarded as capable of performing light roles within the community, such as helping with farming activities or harvesting rice, as was done in the past. Symbolically, the Andun dance represents a release of tension after undergoing a solemn and sacred series of ceremonies. This dance serves as a means to restore social and emotional balance within the community. Through this dance, the community declares that the ritual has been successfully completed and blessed, and now it is time to celebrate the achievement together. For the Little Brides, their participation in this dance also has an educational function: they learn that culture is not only passed down through rules and rites but also through art and collective joyful

expression. In this atmosphere, they learn about beauty, cooperation, social rhythm, and local aesthetic values.



**Figure 6. Communal Feast**

After the entire series of traditional rituals was completed, the next stage was a communal feast organized by the family hosting the Little Brides' *Kayik Nari* ritual. At this moment, the Little Brides along with their peers who participated in the dance were invited back to the house to enjoy drinks and cakes during the *makan buantagh* event as a form of togetherness and celebration. This activity became an important and inseparable part of the overall ritual, not only as a symbolic closing but also as a reinforcement of social values within the community. The communal feast involved the extended families from both sides and the surrounding community, including neighbors, traditional guests, and community leaders. The food served was typically local specialty dishes prepared collectively by the women and extended families before the ritual began. Beyond showing respect to the guests, the food also held symbolic value as a sign of gratitude, prosperity, and shared blessings.

Eating together was not merely a physical activity to satisfy hunger but also a social rite rich with meaning. Gathering to eat in the central room of the house became an arena where social relationships were restored, strengthened, and nurtured after the sacred and regulated series of rituals. The atmosphere became more intimate and open, creating fluid communication spaces among individuals and families. From a social perspective, the feast represented collective social bonding. Relationships between the bride's family, distant relatives, and even seldom-seen community members were reconnected through warm and informal interactions. This was a real form of cultural-based social solidarity, uniting the community through the tradition of sharing a meal laden with values of togetherness and equality. Furthermore, the communal feast demonstrated the practical application of inclusivity principles in local culture. There was no social status difference in the distribution of food; everyone, young and old, rich and poor, sat and ate together. This reflected egalitarian values in the traditional community, where cultural rituals served as a means of equal honor and respect.

In an interview with an elementary school teacher from the Serawai ethnic area, the teacher expressed their view on the *Kayik Nari* tradition and its relevance in education. The teacher acknowledged that this tradition was an important part of the local cultural heritage that needed to be preserved and introduced to younger generations. They believed that the moral and social values contained in the *Kayik Nari* ritual such as respect for elders, mutual cooperation, social responsibility, and care for others were highly relevant to be taught in the school learning process.

The teacher emphasized the importance of a contextual and culturally based learning approach so that students can more easily understand and internalize the values of the tradition through

their own cultural experiences. Cultural activities like introducing the *Kayik Nari* tradition help students develop a positive attitude as citizens with a sense of nationalism and social awareness. However, the implementation of the tradition must be adapted to religious values and contemporary developments to remain relevant and accepted by the broader community. The teacher strongly supports integrating local cultural values into the curriculum as an effort to strengthen students' cultural identity and character.

Research shows that the Little Brides *Ka'aik Nari* ritual in Palak Siring Village contains strong moral and social values important to the local community's life. These values include respect for parents and elders, the spirit of mutual cooperation, social responsibility, and care for others. Respect is shown through honoring elders and traditional leaders during every ritual stage, symbolizing appreciation for tradition and previous generations. The spirit of mutual cooperation is reflected in the involvement of the entire community in preparing and conducting the ritual, strengthening social solidarity and togetherness. Additionally, social responsibility teaches the importance of each individual's role in maintaining harmony and the continuity of traditions, while also caring for the overall community welfare. Care for others is manifested in mutual assistance and attention to community members' needs, especially during the ritual period, which requires cooperation and a sense of belonging.

The research found that the moral and social values embedded in the *Pengantin Kecik Ka'aik Nari* ritual can be effectively integrated into cultural literacy and citizenship education in elementary schools. Through a contextual and participatory learning approach, teachers can utilize this ritual as a medium to introduce local cultural values while nurturing positive social attitudes. For instance, students may engage in classroom simulations inspired by the ritual to explore concepts such as mutual cooperation and social responsibility, making the learning process more engaging and meaningful. As noted by (2022) Siliņa-Jasjukeviča & Rancāne (2022), cultural literacy developed through exposure to traditional rituals fosters a strong sense of cultural identity and appreciation for the diversity of traditions within students' surroundings.

Citizenship education extends beyond the transmission of normative knowledge to include the development of attitudes and behaviors rooted in the moral and social values exemplified by the ritual (Kuttner, 2020). Supporting this, Astari et al. (2024) found that traditional ceremonies are highly effective in instilling character values that align with the objectives of civic education at the elementary level. Similarly, Darmansyah & Susanti (2023) emphasized that the moral values embedded in traditional practices are not only relevant but also provide a solid foundation for the design of Civic Education learning. By actively engaging with cultural traditions, students do more than understand moral values in theory they experience and internalize them within a real social context. Therefore, the *Ka'aik Nari* ritual serves as a powerful and culturally rich educational resource, offering meaningful opportunities for early character formation and civic literacy development. Overall, the ritual presents great potential as a learning medium for instilling moral and social values, making it highly relevant for character building and fostering citizenship awareness among elementary school students.

### 3.1. Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the *Pengantin Kecik Ka'aik Nari* ritual is a distinctive traditional custom of the Serawai community in South Bengkulu, rich with moral and social values highly relevant to character education for elementary school children. This ritual comprises various symbolically and spiritually meaningful ceremonies, such as ritual bathing, dancing, and other customary rites that instill noble values like respect for parents and elders, the spirit of mutual cooperation (gotong royong), social responsibility, and care for others. Recent findings reveal that this ritual not only functions as a means of cultural preservation but also serves as contextual learning material that can enhance cultural literacy and civic awareness. By integrating local cultural values from the *Pengantin Kecik Ka'aik Nari* ritual into the learning process, students gain a deeper understanding of their social environment and internalize positive attitudes and behaviors as cultured and responsible citizens. The study recommends that teachers adopt local culture-based learning approaches, especially through the *Kayik Nari* tradition, in relevant subjects such as Pancasila Education and Indonesian Language. This approach can enrich students' knowledge, foster love and pride for their own culture, and strengthen character building and civic consciousness from an early age.

## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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