

# *Lawas*: An oral literature in Sumbawa East Indonesia (East Indonesia) as a character development means

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**ABSTRACT:** Character deterioration became a worldwide serious problem. Educational institutions have responsibility and strategic role to solve problem. Its effort is to revitalize the role of oral literature based on containing values of character building. If it has seriously implemented, this program can build learners' character based on the values of typical cultural wisdom. Therefore, this research goal is to describe form and explore the potential value of characters contained in oral literature as cultural heritage of the Sumbawa, a city in East Indonesia. data is qualitatively collected t by interviewing Sumbawa culturists. The collected data is checked its validity with various theoretical perspectives and member checking. The data analysis used the interactive model. The research findings shown that (1) *Lawas* form consists of three lines, four lines, and sequential. *Lawas* prototype is in the form of three lines, each is composed of eight syllables. (2) The character values in the *Lawas* oral literature in the form of religious, good personality, awareness, humble, knowledgeable, courage, egalitarian, brotherhood, maintain self-esteem, and equal personality. These character values reflected the Sumbawa people's life philosophy that oriented towards the development or improvement of physical-material and mental-spiritual dimension in a balanced and simultaneous way. Sumbawa people viewed the life of the world and the hereafter must go hand in hand which manifests in the way of thinking, speaking, and behaving. The character values in *Lawas* involved virtue and wisdom in relation to oneself, neighbor, nature, and God.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Character problems have become a crucial agenda around the world. Various effort have conducted to solve them. Everyone believes the greatest impact of character degradation is the lack of humanitarian value that able to ultimately destroy the civilization of the world. Lickona (2008) reports a lot of symptoms of moral decline, including a ten disturbing teenage trends. Kementrian Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia (2010) acknowledges many immoral behaviors demonstrated by adolescents and adults, both in the school environment and in the socio-political environment. This situation motivates the government to optimize the implementation of character education.

Character is an inclusive term for individuals a totality (Arthur 2014). Lickona (2008) states that the characters have been formed from three interrelated parts: moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral behavior. A good character is concerned to the habits of the mind, heart, and good deeds. Character education is virtues developing – well habitually and

trends that guide students to responsible and mature (Ryan & Bohlin 1999). Character is the realization of a person's positive development in the cognitive, social, affective, and ethical dimensions. Being polite and virtuous people with a strong character is the most important quality that every family, school, and community member should have them. Achieving individual happiness and social welfare depend on transferring cultural values to the future generations (Karatay 2011).

An important source of character value is local wisdom. Sibarani (2013) mentions that local wisdom as the prevailing cultural values and norms in organizing society life. The values and norms believed truly become the foundation in the daily behavior of the local people. In many ways, local wisdom is able to anticipate various problems, including that occurred in the contemporary world (Ratna 2011). Indonesia has areas that each area stores an invaluable cultural treasure as a source of local wisdom. One form of cultural property containing character values is traditional literature. Wibawa (2013) points out a number of values contained in

Java ancient literary texts *Serat Centhini* through figure of *Seh Amongraga*, such as rights and obligations, justice, responsibility, conscience, honesty, moral courage, humility, and loyalty. This research studies an oral literature which is one of local wisdom of Sumbawa society in West Nusa Tenggara Province.

*Lawas* is a traditional poem of Sumbawa society. People use it as a means of inner expression. *Lawas* has a high literary values because of the beauty of language and their content including of philosophy, religion, affection, advice, joy, jokes, and so forth. It becomes an integral part of the life of the people that passing down orally from one generation to the next one. Therefore, *Lawas* is an anonymous work and belongs to the collective of Sumbawa people (Zulkarnain 2011).

The character values containing in *Lawas* need extracted to solve the problem of character damages. Oral literature as an ancestral heritage containing local wisdom that can be utilized in community empowerment to create peace and justice and improve prosperity (Sibarani 2015). This research objectives are to describe the *Lawas* form and characters values existing there as part of the cultural heritage of the Sumbawa people.

## 2 RESEARCH METHODS

The study is descriptive qualitative research. The *Lawas* data collected through in-depth interviews with informants, Sumbawa culturist. The selected informant is purposive sampling used. Culturist is a person whom considered competence of *Lawas* and able to provide in-depth and accurate information. In-depth interview technique is an interactive because there is a possibility of mutual influence between researchers and data sources (Goetz & LeCompte 1984). Data validity is triangulation theory used (Patton 2002, Wellington 2015) and members checking is participants asked (informants) to review the accuracy of the interview results (Fraenkel et al. 2012). The data analyzing an interactive analysis model (Miles & Huberman 1994).

## 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 *Lawas* Oral Literature Form in Sumbawa

*Lawas* has a typical form. It studied presents a quite variety form. Taking into account their form, all of them can be categorized into three classes, three lines *Lawas*, four lines *Lawas*, and the sequential *Lawas*. Rhyme is not the crucial thing considered. Most *Lawas* almost does not concerned the rhyme. Here are the three-line of *Lawas* form.

- |                                |                             |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (1) <i>Tutusi lenas mugita</i> | Nearly calm you see<br>down |
| <i>Mara ai dalam dulang</i>    | Such water in tray          |
| <i>Rosa dadi umak rea</i>      | Yet it can be a big wave    |

The *Lawas* prototype in the form of three lines and each line consists of eight syllables, as shown in the above example. All three lines have equal important positions. This is different from the general poetry that consists of preface and contents. The three parts are interconnected meaningfully and form a whole. *Lawas* forms are actually got the influence of *Elompugi*—Bugis poetry—as a result of the acculturation of Sumbawa and Bugis (Makassar) culture. Both are made up of three lines, but the *Elompugi* lines are composed of different syllables, first line is 8, second line is 7, and third row is 6 (Mantja 2011).

Four lines *Lawas* have similar characteristics to general poetry. This form is divided into two parts. The first part (the first two lines) is the preface that serves as a hanger for the second part (the last two lines). This second part is the content. The two parts have not relation of meaning, but bound by the final rhyme. This *Lawas* form is actually affected by the rhyme and the number is not much. Considering the following example.

- |                         |                                       |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (2) <i>Udang manis</i>  | Sweet shrimp in the<br>tray           |
| <i>dalam dulang</i>     |                                       |
| <i>Kemang dangar ka</i> | <i>Dangar</i> flower is<br>summarized |
| <i>tu dampo</i>         |                                       |
| <i>Lamin manis mata</i> | If eyes looked so<br>sweet            |
| <i>nulang</i>           |                                       |
| <i>Panangar sai po</i>  | Who else should<br>consider more      |
| <i>ampo</i>             |                                       |

The sequential *Lawas* is the development of the *Lawas* prototype (three lines). The form is a series of stanzas which each stanza is composed of three lines. The number of stanzas is at least two, while no maximum limit. The singers are free to develop *Lawas* as long as it is relevant to the needs. There are several visible variations of this *Lawas* form. First, the archetype. This variation follows a three-line *Lawas* pattern that does not emphasize rhyme or repetition of certain elements. This only gives priority to meaning. Second, consists of preface and content. The first stanza is the *preface* and the second verse is the content. Both are bound by the final rhyme. This shape is similar to the four-line *Lawas* which is influenced by the rhyme. Third, the words repetition. This occurs on the first line of the next stanza containing the repetition of certain words contained in the last line of the previous stanza. Repetition is not always complete or exact, but rests on the basis of the same word, e.g. *bakemang selak panotang* ‘flowering between longings’ and *ta kusempit kemang ate* ‘this I send heart flowers’. This variation is indicated the existence of cohesion among temples that implies a connection of meaning. Fourth, give priority to the final rhyme. The sound equality at the end of each line is intended to embellish the *Lawas*.

### 3.2 Character Values in *Lawas*

As a local wisdom, *Lawas* is rich with value that is beneficial to life. In it reflected the view of life of the Sumbawa people. Wisdom values as adopted by the Sumbawa people can be identified by exploring the meaning of *Lawas*. Those values are packed with beautiful language. There is a *Lawas* that is easily understood; also their meaning implicit in the artistic word composition. There are four modes of values delivery in the *Lawas*, including of command, prohibition, satire, and analogy. The first two modes tend to be straightforward and the last two modes are implicit. To be able to interpret the *Lawas* meaning accurately, it is required precision, in-deep appreciation, context understanding, and language competence (Sambawa language).

In essence, the character values of Sumbawa people are reflected in *Lawas* are the development or improvement of the two dimensions of life, the world and the hereafter. The values are shown including of religious, good personality, shame to do not be praiseworthy, humble, love science, courage,

egalitarian, brotherhood, self-esteem maintain, and balance personality. For example, consider the following *Lawas*.

- |     |                                 |                                      |
|-----|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| (3) | <i>Sai sate nyaman ate</i>      | Who wants to be happy (his life)     |
|     | <i>Laga lalo tutet ilmu</i>     | Please set out studying a science    |
|     | <i>Lema no nesal pang mundi</i> | In order to not regret in the future |
| (4) | <i>Mana ka tu bongka cabe</i>   | Although we cook a chilly            |
|     | <i>Lamen tu to bawa diri</i>    | If we can guide ourselves            |
|     | <i>Ya muliasi parana</i>        | Will be noble hereby                 |
| (5) | <i>Mana tau barang kayu</i>     | Although unknown people              |
|     | <i>Lamin to sanyaman ate</i>    | If able to be pleasing (good soul)   |
|     | <i>Ba nansi sanak parana</i>    | That is relative                     |

The above three *Lawas* are emphasized three essential values in life. Successively the values are the learner person, good personality, and fraternity. These three values are manifestations of quality personal and interpersonal dimensions. Everyone is born as a lifelong human being. Continuous learning will form a smart person. Good personality will shape authority, so it is respected by others. Meanwhile, a sense of brotherhood will strengthen social cohesion and avoid horizontal conflicts. The brotherhood size for the Sumbawa peoples are not a tribe, religion, race, or class, but a heart. Who brings comfort and pleasant, he is the brother. This also reflects the egalitarian character of the Sumbawa peoples.

- |     |                                 |   |
|-----|---------------------------------|---|
| (6) | <i>Manasi manis parajak</i>     | Although the sweet invitation (seduction) |
|     | <i>Agama dadi paruji</i>        | Religion becomes indicator                |
|     | <i>Na turit lamen basengkal</i> | Do not follow the diversity               |
| (7) | <i>Sate balong desa darat</i>   | Expecting a good hometown                 |
|     | <i>Tu sabalong samalewa</i>     | We guide it in balance                    |
|     | <i>Adil makmur de tu dapat</i>  | We will get fair prosper                  |

The transcendental dimension is evident in both of *Lawas* above. *Lawas* (6) is shown that religion is a standard in addressing various life issues. Decisions, attitudes, and deeds must be consistent with religious values and norms. The salvation of life in the world and the hereafter is believed to be determined by obedience to God. *Lawas* (7) is contained the philosophies that made the slogan by the Sumbawa people, *Sabalong Samalewa*. This phrase means to build or improve the physical-material and mental-spiritual dimensions in a balanced and simultaneous way. It is implemented individually and communally, so that it can bring prosperity in the form of justice and prosperity.

Character has been comprehended as a wisdom and goodness values either on self or others. We can base on Lickona (2004, 2008), Lickona & Davidson (2005), Berkowitz & Bier (2005), Kupperman (2005), and Character Education Partnership (2008) regarding matter of it. Lickona (2004) states that life character has two sides: appropriate attitude in others relationship and in self relationship. A goodness values in others orientated are justice, honesty, gratitude, and love; whereas self-orientated are humility, fortitude, self-control, and striving for the best. It is equal of 'relationship-oriented' moral character and a performance-oriented character (Davidson et al. 2014).

The characters depicted in *Lawas* are not only about relationships with self and others. Humans viewed as a whole that has horizontal and vertical dimensions. Therefore, the character possesses three relations-oriented: the relationship with self, others and environment, and also the relationship with God. This last relationship is manifested in the form of belief, obedience, and worship. In fact, the relationship with God is believed to have a profound effect on success in relationships to others. Qoyyimah (2016) notes the dominance of religiosity values against rational or secular moral values—following the distinction of Durkheim—in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Indonesia. This conclusion is obtained after the values are taught simultaneously. Indonesian society is known as a society religion based, as affirmed in the state ideology, namely Pancasila (Nurdin 2015). Similarly, what happened to children literature books in Turkey. Religious values tend to be more preceded than other values to develop student character (Karatay 2011).

## 4 CONCLUSION

*Lawas* is an oral literature that belongs to the Sumbawa people. It has a distinctive shape. All the complexities of life are reflected to them. It reflects the Sumbawa people's view of the world. *Lawas* is huge of moral teachings that are beneficial to human life in relation to itself, neighbor and nature, and God.

Character education should pay attention to the values of local wisdom that has been obeyed by society. The success of local wisdom in regulating the peaceful and prosperous community life has been proven (Sibarani 2015). The values of local wisdom contained in *Lawas* can be used as a reference in curriculum development at all levels of formal education. Thus, these values can be incorporated into guidelines for the development of cultural education and the character of the nation (Kementrian Pendidikan Nasional 2010).

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