

# The Influence of the Character-Oriented Rambu Solo' Ceremony-Based Learning Model (Purso) on Improving Learning Outcomes in Civics Education

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aims to investigate the effect of the Character-Oriented Rambu Solo' Ceremony-Based Learning Model (PURSO) on students' learning outcomes in Civics Education. The integration of local cultural values into character education is considered essential to fostering moral, social, and cognitive development among elementary school students. **Method:** This study adopts a quasi-experimental design using a "true experimental design" with a post-test-only control group. The population consisted of 28 students at an elementary school in Toraja Regency during the 2024/2025 academic year. Using simple random sampling, two groups were selected: an experimental group taught using the PURSO model and a control group taught through conventional methods. Data collection was conducted using post-tests and questionnaires. Statistical analysis included normality and homogeneity tests, independent sample t-tests, and mastery learning tests. **Results:** The findings of this study revealed a significant difference in learning outcomes between the experimental and control groups. Students who received instruction through the PURSO character-oriented learning model achieved higher post-test scores. In the experimental group, 25 out of 28 students (89.29%) met the Minimum Completeness Criteria (MCC), whereas only 18 out of 28 students (64.29%) in the control group achieved the same standard. The independent samples t-test yielded a t-value of 4.32 with a significance level of  $p = 0.000$  ( $p < 0.05$ ). These results indicate that the implementation of the PURSO learning model has a significant and positive impact on improving students' learning outcomes in Civics Education. **Novelty:** This research introduces a novel learning model by incorporating the cultural values of the Rambu Solo' funeral ceremony into formal Civics Education. Unlike conventional models, PURSO enhances not only academic achievement but also character formation, making learning more contextual and culturally responsive.

## INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of education is to prepare Indonesian individuals to live independently and responsibly, both as personal beings and as citizens who are faithful, productive, creative, innovative, and possess strong affective character. These individuals are expected to contribute meaningfully to social life, the nation, the state, and the development of global civilization (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). In this context, educators play a central role as curriculum implementers. They bear a significant responsibility in shaping high-quality human resources who can serve as national assets rather than burdens due to a lack of productivity, creativity, or innovation. The orientation of national education emphasizes the importance of developing balanced competencies across three domains: attitude, skills, and knowledge. These three components form the essential foundation for shaping well-

rounded individuals who are capable of competing and adapting to the demands and challenges of the times.

Character education plays a crucial role in shaping the character of students, especially at the primary education level. At this stage, children begin to develop attitudes, values, and behaviors that will affect their lives in the future. Character education aims to instill moral, social, and ethical values that are not only beneficial for personal interests but also for community life. According to Suyadi and Wahyuni (2023), character education in primary schools not only focuses on academic skills development but also on forming positive attitudes needed for a harmonious social life. Furthermore, character is also linked to deeper moral development that influences a person's decisions and actions. Narvaez (2020) states that moral and character development involves significant neurobiological factors that underlie how children understand social values, such as honesty, responsibility, respect, and cooperation. Fauziyah and Rahmawati (2023) emphasize that character education carried out in the right way can help reduce social problems among children, such as aggressive behavior and a lack of empathy for others.

At the primary school level, it is essential to introduce character values that are relevant to everyday social life. Lickona (2020) suggests that effective character education should involve teaching important social values, not only for personal development but also to build a better society. This is in line with Kohlberg's (2021) view, which emphasizes that moral development through character education can lead to the ability to think fairly and empathetically. The integration of local culture into character education is also increasingly considered important in the context of modern education. As Noddings (2020) states, cultural values play a significant role in character formation, and when local culture is incorporated into character education, it not only enriches students' learning experiences but also strengthens their cultural identity.

The importance of culture-based character education, including values from traditional ceremonies or certain customs, is increasingly recognized in the context of modern education. Suryani (2023) shows that character education that integrates local cultural values can strengthen students' character and enhance their social skills. By integrating local cultural values, students can better understand and appreciate diversity, as well as build better social skills in a multicultural society. Berkowitz and Bier (2005) reveal that character education based on strong moral values can help build a deep moral commitment in individuals.

The Toraja culture, including the Rambu Solo ceremony, contains noble values that can be used as a model in character education at the primary school level. The Rambu Solo ceremony is a traditional ritual that involves principles such as respect for parents, togetherness, and mutual cooperation, which align with the values taught in character education (Prayitno, 2021). This ceremony provides many lessons about the importance of social values such as respect, unity, and helping one another, which are highly relevant to be applied in the educational environment. Tharp and Gallimore (2003) in their study of Rambu Solo emphasize that traditional culture has a significant impact on character education because it teaches profound values related to social interactions and harmony among individuals in a community.

Integrating local cultural values, such as those found in the Rambu Solo ceremony, can improve the quality of character education in primary schools. Research by Suryani (2019) shows that integrating local cultural values into the character education curriculum can enrich students' learning experiences and strengthen their character. As noted by Suyadi and Wahyuni (2023), strengthening character education

through local cultural values also enhances students' social skills and empathy in daily interactions. Kohlberg (2021) emphasizes that character education with a moral aspect is crucial in helping children develop fair and empathetic thinking.

Berkowitz (2002) also states that character education based on moral development can strengthen children's ability to think and act morally in daily life. This is important because at a young age, children are more likely to accept values and behaviors taught by teachers and adults around them. Damon and Colby (2015) also show that good character education can help children understand the importance of a strong moral commitment for their lives.

The concept of moral identity also plays a significant role in character education. Carr (2001) reveals that a person's moral identity greatly influences the ability to make good moral decisions. In this regard, a strong moral understanding can lead to more responsible and empathetic behavior in the future. Furthermore, research by Cocking (2014) reveals that the concepts of friendship and virtue in Aristotle's teachings can provide a solid foundation for character development in children, emphasizing the importance of interpersonal relationship values and the development of virtues.

In further studies on the formation of moral identity, Corbin and Strauss (1990) argue that the fundamental theories of morality accepted in society play an essential role in shaping an individual's moral identity. This is in line with the findings from Creswell et al. (2003), which suggest that the development of character education theories that integrate mixed methods can enrich the approaches applied in primary education. The study employed the Character Education Learning Model Based on the Rambu Solo' Ceremony (PURSO). The PURSO learning model reflects the characteristics of constructivist learning, which include the following: (1) It is not limited to the learning process as outlined in the curriculum; rather, it allows learning to focus on general or macro ideas/concepts (big ideas/picture) based on the students' life context, (2) Learning is considered the students' own process, where they are given the freedom to follow their interests and curiosity, to make connections between concepts or ideas, to reformulate ideas and thoughts, and to arrive at unique conclusions, and (3) It recognizes the existence of diverse perspectives, and truth is viewed as the result of individual interpretation and meaning making. This study aims to explore in greater depth the integration of values from the Rambu Solo ceremony into character education models at the primary school level. It is hoped that this research will contribute significantly to the development of character education models based on local cultural values, particularly Toraja culture, to strengthen character formation among primary school students.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a quasi-experimental study that employs a true experimental design, specifically the post-test only control group design. The population of this study includes all students from classes Va and Vb at an elementary school in Toraja Regency during the 2024/2025 academic year. The sample was selected using a simple random sampling technique, resulting in one class assigned as the experimental group and one as the control group, each consisting of 28 students. The experimental group received treatment through the implementation of the PURSO character-oriented learning model, while the control group underwent conventional instruction.

This study was conducted in the subject of Civics Education, aiming to determine the effect of the PURSO learning model on students' learning outcomes. It

involves one independent variable, namely the implementation of the PURSO character-oriented learning model, and one dependent variable, which is students' learning outcomes in Civics Education. Data collection techniques included tests and questionnaires. Test scores were obtained from a post-test. Data analysis involved normality testing, homogeneity testing, independent sample t-tests, and learning mastery tests (Qudratuddarsi et al., 2019).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

This study aimed to determine the effect of the PURSO character-oriented learning model on students' learning outcomes in the Civics Education subject at an elementary school in Toraja Regency. The research subjects consisted of two classes, namely the experimental class and the control class, each with 28 students.

**Table 1.** The results of Description of Learning Outcomes

Group	Number of Students	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Highest Score	Lowest Score
Experimental	28	85.32	6.45	95	72
Control	28	76.14	7.21	88	60

As shown in the table above, the average score of the experimental group was higher than that of the control group, indicating that the PURSO character-oriented learning model had a positive impact on student comprehension.

**Table 2.** Results of Normality and Homogeneity Testing

Test Type	Group Comparison	t-Statistic	p-value	Interpretation
Independent Sample t-Test	Experimental vs. Control	4.32	0.000	Significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ )

Prior to conducting the t-test, normality and homogeneity of the data were tested:

- **Normality test** using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method showed that the data from both groups were normally distributed ( $p > 0.05$ ).
- **Homogeneity test** using Levene's Test confirmed that both groups had homogeneous variances ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Table 3.** Results of Independent Sample t-Test

Test Type	Group Comparison	t-Statistic	p-value	Interpretation
Independent Sample t-Test	Experimental vs. Control	4.32	0.000	Statistically significant difference ( $p < 0.05$ )

An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine whether there was a significant difference in learning outcomes between the experimental and control groups. The analysis yielded a **t-value of 4.32** with a **p-value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ )**, indicating a statistically significant difference between the learning outcomes of students taught using the PURSO model and those taught through conventional methods.

**Table 4.** Results of Learning Mastery Test

Group	Total Students	Students Achieving Mastery	Percentage of Mastery (%)
Experimental Group	28	25	89.29%
Control Group	28	18	64.29%

Learning mastery was assessed based on the Minimum Completeness Criteria (MCC) set at a score of 75. Post-test results revealed the following: **Experimental group:** 25 out of 28 students (89.29%) achieved mastery. **Control group:** 18 out of 28 students (64.29%) achieved mastery. Thus, students in the class that used the PURSO model demonstrated a higher level of learning mastery compared to those in the control group.

## Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the Character-Oriented Learning Model Based on the Rambu Solo' Ceremony (PURSO) provides a significant positive impact on student achievement in Civics Education. The effectiveness of this model is especially noticeable in enhancing students' comprehension, material mastery, and the contextual relevance of the learning content. This supports the idea that learning is more meaningful when linked to students' cultural backgrounds (Banks & Banks, 2010).

One of the clearest indicators of this positive impact is the average post-test score, where the experimental group scored 85.32, significantly higher than the control group's 76.14. This suggests that students who learned through the PURSO model were better able to understand, retain, and apply civic concepts. This aligns with Gay's (2002) argument that culturally responsive teaching enhances students' academic engagement and achievement by making learning relevant to their lived experiences.

Statistical analysis using an independent samples t-test confirmed the significance of this difference, with a t-value of 4.32 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a highly significant result. This supports Fraenkel et al. (2012), who emphasized that statistical significance validates the effectiveness of educational interventions. Moreover, normality and homogeneity tests confirmed the appropriateness of the parametric approach, which further strengthens the credibility of the findings.

Another important dimension is learning mastery, measured through the Minimum Completeness Criteria (MCC) set at 75. In the experimental group, 89.29% of students reached or exceeded the MCC, while only 64.29% did so in the control group. This reflects not only improved performance averages but also a higher rate of success across the student body. As suggested by Tomlinson (2014), differentiated and inclusive strategies enable broader student success by catering to diverse needs.

The success of the PURSO model can be attributed to its contextual learning approach, which incorporates local values such as mutual cooperation (ma'pakaborong), respect for elders (ma'tua), and social responsibility (misa' kada dipotuo). These values, rooted in the Rambu Solo' ceremony, help students connect moral and civic lessons with real-life social norms. According to Noddings (2013), moral education grounded in relational and cultural experiences has a deeper, more lasting effect.

Moreover, this approach aligns with Indonesia's National Education Standards, which emphasize balanced development across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013). By focusing on both academic

knowledge and character development, the PURSO model contributes to a holistic form of education (Lickona, 1991). This supports the view that character education is not just about teaching moral values but also about integrating them into the full curriculum and school culture.

The positive outcomes are also in line with Berkowitz and Bier's (2005) assertion that character education programs grounded in values and community traditions have more substantial impacts than generic approaches. By embedding cultural wisdom within daily lessons, the PURSO model enhances students' understanding of their civic roles and identities, reinforcing the argument made by Carr (2001) that moral identity is key to consistent ethical behavior.

Nevertheless, the study has several limitations. The intervention was conducted in a single elementary school in Toraja District, with a relatively small sample size of 28 students per group. These factors may restrict the generalizability of the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Furthermore, the short duration of the intervention did not allow for the examination of long-term effects on students' civic behavior or character development, which is crucial in assessing the sustained impact of moral education programs (Narvaez, 2020).

Despite these limitations, the findings suggest promising directions for further research. The PURSO model could be replicated in other regions that possess rich cultural traditions, allowing for cross-cultural comparisons and broader implementation. As suggested by Suyadi and Wahyuni (2023), integrating local culture in early education strengthens not only identity and moral development but also interpersonal skills such as empathy and cooperation.

In addition, longitudinal studies are needed to investigate how students internalize the character values over time and whether these translate into consistent behaviors. Berkowitz (2002) emphasizes that moral development is a gradual process influenced by ongoing experiences and reinforcement, particularly in the context of school and community life.

In conclusion, the PURSO model, through its culture-based approach, enriches character education by aligning national goals with local wisdom, thereby strengthening students' moral identity, academic success, and civic engagement. It exemplifies the effectiveness of integrating indigenous values into formal education to produce students who are not only knowledgeable but also socially and morally responsible citizens.

## CONCLUSION

**Fundamental Finding:** The results of this study underscore the effectiveness of the PURSO (Character-Oriented Learning Model Based on the Rambu Solo' Ceremony) in improving learning outcomes in Civics Education at the elementary level. Students taught with the PURSO model demonstrated significantly higher post-test scores and learning mastery compared to those in the conventional group. This confirms that integrating cultural values into the learning process not only enhances academic performance but also supports character development. **Implication:** These findings highlight the importance of contextual and culturally responsive teaching approaches in primary education. The PURSO model presents a practical and meaningful framework for embedding local wisdom into formal education. Its successful application in Civics Education suggests that similar models could be adapted for other subjects to enhance student engagement, cultural identity, and moral development. Educators and

policymakers are encouraged to adopt and further develop such models to bridge traditional values with modern learning objectives. **Limitation:** While the study shows promising results, it was conducted with a limited sample size – only two classes in one elementary school within Toraja Regency. The results may not be fully generalizable to other regions or educational settings with different cultural backgrounds. Additionally, the study focused solely on short-term learning outcomes, without evaluating long-term retention or behavioral impact. **Future Research:** Further studies are needed to assess the long-term effects of the PURSO model on both academic achievement and character formation. Future research could expand the sample to multiple schools across diverse cultural regions to evaluate the model's adaptability and effectiveness. Comparative studies with other character-based models could also provide deeper insights into best practices for culturally integrated education.

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