

The Moral Values of *Serat Wulangreh* as a Foundation for Character Education among Adolescents in the Fishing Village of Bandengan

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to explore the moral values in *Serat Wulangreh* by Sri Susuhunan Pakubuwana IV and analyze its relevance as a moral foundation in character education for adolescents in Kampung Nelayan Bandengan. This research focuses on the phenomenon of deviant behavior among adolescents which indicates the weakness of internalizing character values that are contextual with the local culture. The method used in this study is a qualitative case study approach, which combines in-depth interviews, participatory observation, focused group discussions (FGD), and analysis of the *Serat Wulangreh* tembang texts. The findings of the study show that *Serat Wulangreh* contains moral values such as diligence, discipline, humility (*tawadhu*), self-control, moral vigilance, and honesty, which align with the character framework according to Lickona. These values play a crucial role in shaping adolescent behavior with a strong Javanese moral foundation. The conclusion of this study is that the integration of values from *Serat Wulangreh* into community-based character education can strengthen the moral foundation of adolescents in behaving well.

Keywords: moral values; character education; adolescents; *serat wulangreh*

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of increasingly prevalent deviant behavior among Indonesian teenagers, such as alcohol consumption, promiscuity, and brawls, indicates the weakness of moral education that is contextual to the local culture (Istante, 2023). Behaviors that were previously considered taboo are now being normalized as part of a permissive lifestyle, with loose social interaction patterns and minimal social control (Pedrero-García, 2018). Enjoying entertainment in special places and the consumption of narcotics and alcohol has become a trend among teenagers today (McCormack et al., 2021). This phenomenon is becoming more concerning, not only in urban areas but has spread to coastal areas such as Bandengan Fisherman Village, where social and economic pressures are exacerbated by the lack of parental supervision and limited access to meaningful character guidance (Rahmawati & Rozak Hanafi, 2022).

Bandengan Fisherman Village is one of the northern coastal areas located in Kendal Regency, Central Java. The majority of the population works as fishermen, with a work rhythm that requires them to be at sea for extended. The densely populated and unhealthy settlement

conditions due to periodic tidal flooding (Nuraini, 2023; Sunarna et al., 2023) mean that adolescents grow up in an environment with minimal moral guidance. Natasya's (2021) research found that juvenile delinquency occurs due to the lack of parental supervision and insufficient instilling of religious values in the environment, which aligns with the findings of Sanjaya and Setiawati (2021) who stated that weak parental control directly correlates with the increase in juvenile delinquency. Purba and Fitria (2024) also emphasized that the lack of family supervision is a dominant factor in the emergence of deviant behavior.

In the context of character education to address deviant behavior among teenagers, an approach based on local culture is not only relevant but also strategic (T. M. P. Astuti et al., 2014; Simanjuntak, 2023). From the perspective of social studies education (IPS), culture is not only learned as a historical heritage (T. Astuti, 2017) but also as a source of contextual value education praxis (Farhaeni & Martin, 2023). Therefore, the use of local values, such as those found in *Serat Wulangreh*, provides an authentic space for the formation of adolescent character that aligns with their social environment. Character education within the framework of local culture creates continuity between the formal education system

and the everyday lives of students. The character education theory developed by Lickona (1991) serves as the conceptual foundation for optimizing this approach. This theory emphasizes the importance of integrating the aspects of moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action (Munawarsyah & Fakhurridha, 2024).

In the context of teenagers in Bandengan Fisherman Village, who live in social conditions with minimal family supervision, strong peer pressure, and limited access to value education, a systemic and contextual character education approach becomes urgent. One of the relevant and contextual sources of moral values to build the character of teenagers is *Serat Wulangreh* authored by Sri Susuhunan Pakubuwana IV (Yulita & Panani, 2019). Several teachings were conveyed by Pakubuwana IV to the youth through *Serat Wulangreh* (Achmad, 2016;). This manuscript is a heritage of classical Javanese literature that contains noble ethical teachings reflecting the Javanese way of life (Ismawati & Warsito, 2021), such as values of simplicity, honesty, politeness, hard work, humility, and self-control (Damairia et al., 2022; Shobron & Setiawan, 2022; Sukadari, 2020). These values are conveyed through *tembang macapat* (Ageng Pangestu Rama, 2007), which are not only aesthetic (Wardhani & Muhadjir, 2017) but also imbued with deep moral meaning (Wangsa et al., 2019).

By exploring these values, this study aims to explore the moral values in *Serat Wulangreh* authored by IV and examine its relevance in character education for teenagers in Bandengan Fisherman Village. The internalization of these moral values is expected to help teenagers in Bandengan form a positive character based on the teachings of *Serat Wulangreh*, thus developing a strong cultural identity.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen to deeply explore the moral values contained in *Serat Wulangreh* authored by IV and its relevance to the behavior of teenagers in Bandengan Fisherman Village, Kendal Regency, Central Java. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, participatory observation, documentation study, and focus group discussions (FGD). The FGD technique in this research aims to gather in-depth information about the perceptions, experiences, and behaviors of teenagers in Bandengan and their

connection with the moral values in *Serat Wulangreh*. The documentation study was conducted by reading and analyzing *Serat Wulangreh* to explore and understand the meanings of the values contained in the text, so that they can be aligned with the social and cultural conditions in Bandengan Fisherman Village. The informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques with specific criteria 6 (Creswell, 2014). The validity of the data was tested through technique triangulation (interviews, observations, documents, and FGDs) and source triangulation (various related parties: teenagers, parents, teachers, religious leaders). The data analysis technique followed the interactive model by Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña (2020), which includes the stages of data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Moral Values in *Serat Wulangreh*

This study finds that the moral values contained in *Serat Wulangreh* are relevant to the social conditions and behavior of teenagers in Bandengan Fisherman Village. The following are the research findings related to the moral values in *Serat Wulangreh*:

Values of Perseverance and Discipline

Serat Wulangreh carries an implied meaning regarding the values of perseverance and discipline, teaching teenagers to not only focus on physical pleasures such as eating and sleeping, but also to train themselves by sharpening the heart and cultivating a heroic attitude (Nurhayati, 2020). The teachings of perseverance and discipline are reflected in the first stanza, Pupuh ke-2 Kinanthi:

“Padha gulangen ing kalbu, ing sasmita amrih lantip, Aja pijer mangan nendra, kaprawiran den kaesthi. Pesunen sariranira, sudanen dhahar lan guling” (Hadiningrat, 1994).

The importance of inner training and avoiding a life filled only with physical pleasures, such as eating and sleeping. Teenagers who can maintain perseverance and discipline in their studies tend to have clear life directions and are better equipped to solve problems wisely (Vindy Salsabila et al., 2020).

Value of Humility (Tawadhu')

Serat Wulangreh teaches the importance of humility, which is reflected in the following advice:

Yen wus tinitah wong agung, aja sira gumunggung dhiri, aja raket lan wong ala, kang ala lakunireku, nora wurung ngajak-ajak, satemah anenulari (Kanjeng Susuhunan Pakubuwana IV, 1994).

The value of tawadhu' (humility), as taught in *Serat Wulangreh*, provides guidance for teenagers in maintaining self-discipline and forming positive character amidst the temptations and peer pressure of their social interactions (Muhammadiyah, 2024). The family plays a very important role in instilling the value of humility through direct role modeling (Salah et al., 2024). Parents who directly teach and exemplify humble attitudes in their daily lives serve as the primary models that influence the development of children's character (Fatmala, 2022). Society, as an educational center, plays a significant role in the internalization of humility values (Zaenullah & Efendiy, 2018).

The Value of Self-Control

Serat Wulangreh teaches the importance of being selective in choosing friends, as reflected in the following value:

Aja raket lan wong ala, kang ala lakunireku, nora wurung ngajak-ajak, satemah anenulari (Kanjeng Susuhunan Pakubuwana IV, 1994).

The value of self-control in *Serat Wulangreh* is understood as the individual's ability to resist negative external influences and maintain consistency in behavior that aligns with moral values (Hadiningrat, 1994). Teenagers who are not trained to control their momentary impulses tend to seek instant gratification without considering the long-term consequences (Ginting et al., 2024; Sukadari, 2020).

Figure 1 illustrates that teenagers in Bandengan Fisherman's Village have the potential to be influenced by free association and deviant behaviors. This aligns with the findings of Rahmawati and Setiawati (2020), which state that teenagers involved in peer groups with negative behaviors, such as alcohol consumption or fighting, are more likely to adopt similar behaviors, even when they are aware of the negative consequences.

The Value of Vigilance

Serat Wulangreh contains a moral teaching about moral vigilance, which can be understood as self-control in the face of temptations and invitations to commit wrongdoing, as stated in the proverb:

Sanadyan ta nora melu, pasthi wruh solahing

maling. Kaya mangkono sabarang, panggawe ala puniki, sok weruha nuli bisa. Yeku panuntuning eblis (Kanjeng Susuhunan Pakubuwana IV, 1994).



Figure 1. Social Interactions of Teenagers in Bandengan Fisherman's Village Prone to Deviant Behaviors.

Source: Researcher's Documentation, 2024

Teenagers in Bandengan Fisherman's Village who understand the teachings of vigilance in *Serat Wulangreh* develop moral knowing, which is their understanding of the potential dangers of social temptations, such as drug use or alcohol consumption, even if they have not directly engaged in such behaviors.

The Value of Honesty

Honesty is another essential value contained in *Serat Wulangreh*, as reflected in the following teaching:

"Aja nganti kebanjur, barang polah ingkang nora jujur, yen kebanjur sayekti kojur tan becik, becik ngupayaa iku, pitutur ingkang sayektos (Kanjeng Susuhunan Pakubuwana IV, 1994).

The honesty taught in *Serat Wulangreh* can be linked to Kohlberg's stages of morality. Kohlberg (1981) identifies three levels of morality: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional, particularly the conventional and post-conventional stages.

Relevance of the Moral Values in *Serat Wulangreh* to the Social Realities of Teenagers in Bandengan Fisherman Village

The relevance of the moral values in *Serat Wulangreh* to the lives of teenagers in Kampung Nelayan Bandengan can be further analyzed through a concrete comparison between the moral teachings in the text and the social conditions faced by the teenagers in their everyday lives.

Table 1 illustrates the relationship between the moral values in *Serat Wulangreh* and the social

Table 1. Relevance of the Moral Values in *Serat Wulangreh* to the Social Reality of Teenagers in Bandengan Fisherman Villag

No	Moral Values in <i>Serat Wulangreh</i>	Admonition / Excerpt from <i>Serat Wulangreh</i>	Social Reality of Teenagers in Bandengan	Relevance & Potential for Internalization
1	Perseverance and Discipline	<i>Panggawe becik puniku, gampang yen wus den lakoni, angel yen durung kalakyan.</i>	Many teenagers drop out of school because they choose to work at sea to help their family's economy.	This value can be instilled to change short-term thinking patterns, teaching that learning is also part of the struggle for a better future.
2	Humility (Tawadhu')	<i>Yen wus tinitah wong agung, aja sira gumunggung dhiri..</i>	Some teenagers show stubbornness or feel they are already enough with their experience at sea.	This value can be used to instill the importance of humility in accepting knowledge and advice from teachers or local figures.
3	Selectivity in Friendship	<i>Aja raket lan wong ala, kang ala lakunireku.</i>	Teenagers are in a tightly-knit social community, risking being caught in unhealthy social circles.	This value strengthens awareness of choosing a constructive social environment, both on land and at sea.
4	Vigilance	<i>Sanadyan ta nora melu, pasthi wruh solahing maling. Kaya mangkono sabarang, panggawe ala puniki, sok weruha nuli bisa. Yeku panuntuning eblis</i> (Kanjeng Susuhunan Pakubuwana IV, 1994).	High social pressure: brawls, alcohol consumption, gambling, or deviant behavior after returning from sea.	This value reinforces self-control and moral reflection, which is important as teenagers spend more time outside the home.
5	Honesty	<i>Aja nganti kebanjur, barang polah ingkang nora jujur, yen kebanjur sayekti kojur tan becik, becik ngupayaa iku, pitutur ingkang sayektos</i>	In times of economic pressure, teenagers are vulnerable to lying or committing small frauds for money.	The internalization of this value builds social and spiritual integrity, both at school and while working at sea.

challenges faced by teenagers in Bandengan Fisherman Village. The findings are consistent with previous literature stating that culture-based character education is effective in shaping the moral character of teenagers (Ihwani et al., 2023). Lickona (1991) emphasizes that successful character education must integrate moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the moral values in *Serat Wulangreh*, such as perseverance, humility, self-control, moral vigilance, and honesty, have real relevance in addressing the issues faced by teenagers in Bandengan Fisherman Village, who are confronted with social and economic pressures, as well as a lack of role models. These teachings provide an ethical foundation that can shape the character of coastal teenagers in facing challenges such as promiscuity, alcohol consumption, brawls, and school dropout.

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