



Symbolic Values of the "Almari Meteng" Tradition in Family Education: A Case Study in East Java, Indonesia

Lila Pangestu Hadiningrum

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Mas Said Surakarta, Indonesia

Corresponden E-mail: lilahadiningrum@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study examines the contextualization of the interpretative symbolic meaning of the "Almari Meteng" tradition in marriage as family education in Mancon Village, Wilangan District, Nganjuk Regency, East Java. Using qualitative field research methods, including interviews and documentation, the study explores the symbolic values embedded in this tradition and their relevance to family education. The findings reveal that the *Almari Meteng* tradition, involving the groom bringing household items to the bride's family, carries rich symbolic meanings related to family resilience, gratitude, social values, and strengthening relationships. The tradition reflects important family education values such as harmony, respect, mutual cooperation, spirituality, health awareness, and children's education. The study employs theoretical frameworks including symbolic interactionism, ritual theory, and Bourdieu's concept of habitus to analyze the tradition's social and cultural implications. While facing challenges from modernization and urbanization, the *Almari Meteng* tradition demonstrates adaptability and continues to play a significant role in preserving cultural identity and instilling important values in family life. This research contributes to understanding the dynamics of local cultural practices in the context of social change and their potential for sustainable cultural preservation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of rapid globalization and modernization, wedding traditions across the world, particularly in developing countries, are undergoing significant changes. Urbanization, technological advancements, and shifts in social values have resulted in the transformation of traditional marriage practices. Research by Jones (2007) and Knodel (1977) indicates that in Asia, there has been an increase in the age of first marriage, a decline in fertility rates, and alterations in wedding rituals. In Africa, Leeds-Hurwitz (2002) notes a blending of traditional and modern elements in wedding ceremonies. Meanwhile, in South America, Anukriti and Dasgupta (2017) observes a shift from family-arranged marriages towards greater individual choice. This global phenomenon reflects the tension between preserving cultural heritage and adopting contemporary lifestyles, which is also evident in the Indonesian context, particularly in the *Almari Meteng* tradition of East Java. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for analyzing how local traditions persist, adapt, or change amidst the currents of global modernization.

Amid these global changes, Indonesia, as a developing country with a rich cultural heritage, faces similar challenges in maintaining and reinterpreting its traditional wedding rituals, as exemplified by the *Almari Meteng* tradition in East Java.

A marriage can be said to be valid according to law if it fulfills the requirements for a legal and harmonious marriage. And every society certainly has special requirements in each region. In Javanese society in particular, the implementation of Javanese traditional marriages is something that has an important position and has a very significant impact on everyday life. This is due to the nature of Javanese people who hold traditions so strongly and their belief in supernatural powers makes them afraid to abandon existing traditions (Sudirman, 2018). Tradition is an aspect of regional culture and at the same time a product of local history that can add to regional and even national cultural treasures. In the amendment to the 1945 Constitution, article 32 paragraph 1, it is stated that "The State Promotes Indonesian National Culture in the midst of world civilization by guaranteeing the freedom of society to maintain and develop its cultural values". This shows that each region is given the widest possible freedom to display the traditions owned by the community and continue to maintain their preservation from civilization and progress over time, and tradition is an action that is repeated by some people in the same form if violated without giving rise to real sanctions and firm. From the definition above, tradition has the same pattern, namely an event that is repeated over and over again by the supporting community.

Traditions can sometimes occupy a parallel position with spiritual rituals or religious teachings. It is widely known that a society considers a tradition to be a basic part of religion that has entered the fabric of society's life. This is because traditions, rituals and religious teachings have similarities in that they were taught by ancestors which were passed down with the intention of teaching or providing good guidance and benefits for human life (Ambarwati, 2018). Eva Diah Ardiani and Ahmad Musonnif explains about the pairing of bundles in marriage in society, where this

tradition is an expression of gratitude and a request to God so that the wedding event that will be held runs smoothly and without obstacles. In this custom, offerings made from banana leaves are tied and placed in the yard, every corner of the house, bathroom and kitchen, which is done by traditional (Musonnif, 2022). Wai research explores how modernization and urbanization are changing traditional marriage values in urban China, leading to shifts in gender roles and expectations within marriage (Wei, 2019). Odongo investigates the role of cultural values in shaping marriage practices and rituals in various African societies, highlighting the diversity and richness of African marital traditions (Odongo, 2020).

Each region has a unique culture that has become a tradition, one special tradition that is still often practiced in Indonesia is traditional marriage. This also happens among the people of Awar-Awar Hamlet, Mancon Village, Wilangan District, Nganjuk Regency, who still strongly adhere to traditions in the wedding process. Culturally, the Javanese people in general and the people of Wilangan sub-district in particular still adhere to the customs of their ancestors which they consider to be a legacy of tradition passed down from generation to generation which they must preserve and must not be abandoned, let alone erased. Even though the social, economic and cultural conditions of the people of Wilangan sub-district are now in general, it has experienced quite significant developments along with the progress of the times, but in Awar-Awar Hamlet, researchers found a tradition that is still held firmly by the people of Awar-Awar Hamlet which is still carried out today. The traditional tradition of bringing a meteng cupboard to a wedding is carried out by the groom, carried out after the marriage ceremony. then in giving the meteng cupboard it is given to the bride's place after the traditional wedding ceremony takes place. One of the traditional traditions is bringing a meteng cupboard to a wedding in the Mancon Village area, Awar-Awar Village, Wilangan District, Nganjuk Regency.

This tradition has its roots in Javanese beliefs which are full of symbolism. *Almari Meteng* is believed to have started from the village's ancestral traditions which considered it important to have harmony and balance between the real world and the spiritual world. Its origins cannot be separated from the Javanese people's belief in supernatural powers that can influence daily life, including welfare and fertility. In practice, *Almari Meteng* is carried out by placing a cupboard (cupboard) at the center of the ritual, which is decorated and filled with various symbolic objects, such as cloth, fruit and household utensils. The cupboard was thought to "contain" something valuable, which usually symbolized fertility, prosperity and abundance (Supriyono, 2017).

The "*Almari Meteng*" wedding tradition is a form of ritual that has unique characteristics in certain regions in Indonesia, especially among Javanese people. To find similar traditions in other regions of Indonesia or among Muslim communities, here are some examples of wedding traditions that have similarities: in Bali, there is a wedding tradition called "marriage of the house," where the wedding is performed quickly if the woman becomes pregnant beforehand. Marry. This tradition aims to maintain the honor of the family and partner, as well as to legitimize the child who will be born (Hamka, 2018). The "Al-A'rūf" tradition in Muslim communities in the Middle East, if a woman is found to be pregnant out of wedlock, a quick marriage (Al-

A'rūf) is often performed to legitimize the pregnancy and maintain family honor. This practice reflects the adjustment of tradition to social and religious norms (Alwi, 2019).

As time goes by, the *Almari Meteng* tradition has changed, especially in terms of its implementation. In the past, this ritual was very sacred and was strictly followed according to inherited customs. However, with modernization and social change, some elements of this ritual have begun to be adapted to the conditions of the times. For example, ritual elements that were considered too traditional are starting to be adapted to be more relevant to the younger generation, or integrated with more modern events. However, the essence of this ritual namely as a symbol of hope for fertility and abundance is maintained. The younger generation in the village is still involved in maintaining and preserving this tradition, although with some modifications so that it remains attractive and acceptable in the changing social context.

This tradition is carried out when a groom is going to marry a woman he has chosen as his life partner, where the prospective groom must bring a cupboard which contains household furniture or staple food which is brought to the bride after the wedding ceremony at the *seseraan* event/meeting friends. The traditional tradition of carrying a *meteng* cupboard at a wedding conveys the values of family resilience in the symbol of the knick-knacks (Gupuh, 2023).

An interpretive approach is used to refocus attention on sharing concrete forms of cultural meaning, in their special and complex texture, without falling into the trap of cultural historicism in its classical form. The concept of culture as stated by Clifford Geertz above at least implies that culture is a system of symbols, so that the cultural process must be understood, translated and interpreted (Misnawati, 2019). From the several statements above, this study further reveals the contextualization of the interpretive symbolic value of the *Almari Meteng* tradition in marriage in Awar-Awar Hamlet, Mancon Village, Wilangan District, Nganjuk Regency studied in Family Education.

Despite numerous studies on wedding traditions in Indonesia, particularly in East Java, there remains a gap in the in-depth understanding of symbolic meanings and family education values within specific traditions such as *Almari Meteng*. Previous studies, such as those conducted by Risyanti et al. (2022), Suyadi and Sabiq (2020), have primarily focused on general aspects of Javanese wedding rituals, but have not thoroughly explored how specific traditions like *Almari Meteng* contribute to family education and cultural preservation. This research aims to fill this gap by analyzing the contextualization of the interpretive symbolic meaning of the *Almari Meteng* tradition in marriage as a form of family education.

The *Almari Meteng* tradition holds particular significance in the context of family education and cultural preservation. This phenomenon underscores the urgency to understand and preserve traditions such as *Almari Meteng*, which not only safeguard cultural heritage but also play a role in transmitting important values in family education. This study aims to examine the *Almari Meteng* tradition in East Java, Indonesia, by identifying its symbolic meanings, analyzing their translation into

modern family education contexts, and evaluating the tradition's role in maintaining social cohesion and cultural identity. Through this multifaceted approach, the research seeks to understand how this specific cultural practice adapts to contemporary challenges while contributing to the preservation of local heritage and the transmission of familial values in a rapidly changing societal landscape.

To achieve these objectives, this research will address the following questions: How is the symbolic meaning in the *Almari Meteng* tradition interpreted by the Mancon Village community? How does this tradition contribute to family education in a modern context? What are the challenges and strategies in preserving this tradition amidst the currents of modernization? The theoretical framework employed in this study combines Blumer's symbolic interactionism theory (1969), Victor Turner's ritual theory (1969), and Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus (1990). This multi-theoretical approach enables a comprehensive analysis of the symbolic, ritualistic, and sociocultural aspects of the *Almari Meteng* tradition.

Mancon Village, the location of this study, is situated in Wilangan District, Nganjuk Regency, East Java. With a population of approximately 5.128 inhabitants, this village possesses unique characteristics as a transitional area between urban and rural regions, reflecting the dynamics of socio-cultural changes occurring in many parts of Indonesia. This research is expected to contribute significantly to the fields of cultural anthropology and family sociology, providing new insights into how local traditions adapt and maintain their relevance in a modern context. The structure of this paper will begin with a literature review, followed by research methodology, results and discussion, and a conclusion reflecting on the theoretical and practical implications of the research findings.

2. METHODS

In this research, researchers used field research, namely research carried out systematically by highlighting themes that exist in the field (Arikunto, 1995). Data sources used in this research include primary data and secondary data. Data collection techniques are a way to obtain data that meets predetermined data standards. The techniques used by the author in this research are interviews and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted as a data collection process for research (Hardani, 2020). The sampling technique in this research used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is sampling carried out according to the required sample requirements (Fauzy, 2019).

The sampling was carried out deliberately by taking only certain samples that had characteristics and features. The interviews in Mancon Village with traditional practitioners, religious figures and traditional leaders there are called *mantoklek* whose role is: determining the date and day of someone's wedding and matching someone's weton before the wedding. The sources in this research include traditional actors, namely traditional leaders and religious leaders. Data collection in documentation is an activity of tracing, checking, reviewing secondary data, secondary data includes several aspects of secondary data that are private and public (Taufani, 2020).

So the researcher applies this documentation to complete the data from this research. Data in this case was obtained from the Mancon Village office, Wilangan

sub-district, Nganjuk Regency as well as photos of traditional processions. This research uses descriptive qualitative data analysis techniques, namely trying to describe certain things about certain situations or symptoms and aims to describe a situation, event or status of a phenomenon, so that it is easy to understand and draw conclusions. Then, according to Miles and Huberman, qualitative data analysis consists of three streams of activities that occur together, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions (Suharsimi, 2005).

For data validity, data triangulation is used which can be interpreted as a method or technique for examining data that can be carried out, one of which is by utilizing other data to compare with data that has been obtained so that the research can be accounted for (Lexy, 2007). In this case, researchers went directly to the location and gathered data from informants, namely by interviewing traditional leaders, religious leaders and residents who still believed in the *Almari Meteng* tradition. In analyzing the *Almari Meteng* wedding tradition using symbolic interactionism theory, Victor Turner's ritual theory, or Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus, the concept of gender we can understand how this tradition reflects social and cultural dynamics through these lenses, also how traditions are implemented and changes over time, the important values of these traditions which can be analyzed from a family education perspective as well as practical social and cultural implications.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General description of the *Almari Meteng* tradition in weddings in Mancon Village, Wilangan District, Nganjuk Regency The *Almari Meteng* tradition is a Javanese traditional ceremony and especially in East Javanese society, this tradition is still preserved today, the *Almari Meteng* tradition has the meaning of a custom brought by a man who is handed over to a woman at the time of handover at the woman's place. This tradition is intended as preparation for the initial start of the household that will be carried out by the bride and groom so that something that is needed in the household is carried out well and has blessings in the future in starting the household that will be run (Mintarjo, 2024). This research shows that local cultural values influence marriage traditions. This is in line with the statement (Fajar, 2015) that local customs and beliefs play an important role in the marriage process. Ling's study examines the relationship between cultural values and marriage satisfaction among Asian couples, focusing on how traditional values such as filial piety and collectivism impact marital harmony (Ling, 2017)

The *Almari Meteng* tradition in this custom has become an expression of the Javanese people, especially in the Nganjuk area, in preserving their traditions and respecting the cultural heritage of their ancestors. Because for them, custom is a law that has been passed down from their ancestors and seeks stability in holding a wedding.



Figure 1. Documentation of *Almari Meteng* traditional practices



Figure 2. Documentation of *Almari Meteng* traditional practices

The traditional practices of *Almari Meteng*, Mancon Village, Wilangan District, Nganjuk Regency include:

Tembungan

The procession before the wedding is *tembungan*, where the two families discuss the marriage that will take place with the intention of the man proposing to the woman, and after that the woman responds to the proposal made by the man. Proposals in Islam are known as *khitbah*, where in the village of Manconini one carries out the *khitbah* only with one's parents and bringing things like sugar, tea and so on. In this case, it is the main step in which the man conveys his intention to the woman's family to ask for his daughter's hand in marriage or has the desire to build a household with his daughter.

Determining the day or date of the contract

In the previous implementation process, the day of the contract must be determined, which must be done using the Javanese method, namely matching the birth dates of the 2 bride and groom.

Contract (akad)

After the contract is carried out, the man brings the goods or can be called a gift, what is brought is household equipment such as kitchen spices, and household furniture such as cupboards, tables, chairs, *sak tundun* rice, bananas, coconuts in rows and so on. Now these are things like mattresses, motorbikes and goats and they have their own meaning. Family education in the interpretive symbolic value of the *Almari Meteng* Tradition in marriage And one of the functions of tradition itself is to provide

a convincing collective symbol or identity, strengthening primordial loyalty to the group with emblems, mythology. And this is realized in the *Almari Meteng* custom of carrying an item. And these items such as cupboards, tables and chairs, kitchen utensils, rice, banana sacks, and coconuts in renteng renteng have meanings that are not given for nothing but have the following meaning and value:

- 1) A cupboard describes a place for storing things, which means that men in the family must be able to act as protectors for their family and in the future they must try to save the shortcomings that occur in their family. The symbolic meaning of this cupboard is found in Al-Quran surah An-Nisa verse 34:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَنَاطَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ اللَّهُ وَالَّتِي تَخَافُونَ نُشُوزَهُنَّ فَعِظُوهُنَّ وَاهْجُرُوهُنَّ فِي الْمَضَاجِعِ وَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ فَإِنِ اطَّعْتُمْ فَلَا تَبْغُوا عَلَيْهِنَّ سَبِيلًا إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلِيمًا كَبِيرًا

"Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand."

This verse explains that a husband or man has an obligation as a protector and has a responsibility for his family, because basically a man is the leader of the household who has an obligation to protect his family, and has a responsibility to uphold the goodness of his family.

- 2) Coconut fruit has a hard and strong texture, illustrating that men must have strong principles in leading the family. And in the coconut there is white water which depicts purity, which in the family must be based on a pure heart because later you will be asked for accountability.

لَكُمْ رَاعٍ، وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَن رَعِيَّتِهِ

"Each of you is a leader and every leader will be held responsible for those they lead."
(H.R. Bukhari)

- 3) One tundun banana fruit depicts a symbol of sweetness and having good hopes in running a household. And it means that the couple must have the same personality, be mature, have the same determination and seriousness, and "sak tundun" has an upward facing shape that has the meaning of always asking Allah SWT for prayer. The symbolic meaning of this cupboard is found in the Al Quran surah An-Nisa verse 21:

وَكَيْفَ تَأْخُذُونَهُ وَقَدْ أَفْضَىٰ بَعْضُكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَعْضٍ وَأَخَذْنَ مِنْكُمْ مِّيثَاقًا غَلِيظًا ۚ

"And how could you take it while you have gone in unto each other and they have taken from you a solemn covenant."

- 4) Rice in the traditional meteng cupboard means fertility and tranquility, which means peace is expected in running the household. The symbolic meaning of this cupboard is found in the Koran surah Ar-Rum verse 21:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ٢١

"And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought."

- 5) From the above, it can be concluded that the traditions that occur in the community of Mancon Village, Wilangan District are in accordance with Islamic law or recommendations, even though what occurs in the community are various intentions such as not to receive backbiting from neighbors, the meaning or hope contained in this tradition is in accordance with what Islamic law teaches because the origin of carrying out the above custom is an act of respect for women and as a sign of gratitude to the woman's family for accepting her as a new family.
- 6) Onions "*brambang*" illustrate that the household must always be watered with good things.

The values contained in this tradition as family education are:

- 1) The Value of Being Thankful to God Grateful for the gift of blessings. The *Almari Meteng* tradition is a sign of gratitude which is marked by actions and attitudes because they have been given the gift of pleasure in the form of being allowed to get married.
- 2) Social value One of the social values contained in the *Almari Meteng* tradition is teaching alms. In carrying out this custom, there are items which are given to women
- 3) Strengthen friendship This custom can be said to be a form of gratitude expressed by men to women, who have been accepted as in-laws or extended family.

This shows that the values of the *Almari Meteng* tradition strengthen families to have tenacity and resilience that contain monetary capabilities in order to live independently and develop themselves and their families with an emphasis on religious values, family commitment to live in harmony and inner and outer happiness and improve welfare. These traditional values are also closely related to social concern and social cohesion. In line with the results of the research above, the religious values contained in Javanese traditional marriage ceremonies and how these values influence the dynamics of husband and wife relationships in Javanese society (Wulandari, 2018). This is in line with the statement (Ramadinah, 2022) which states Cultural values can be determined as the efforts made by a leader, even the community or an educational institution that develops the values that exist in every human being and society so that good change can be achieved. Education is closely related to the instillation of values, such as values local wisdom in each community (Rochgiyanti, 2017) and through the process of internalization and appreciation of

forming values their personality in mingling in society, developing community life which is more prosperous and develops a dignified national life.

With advances in technology and media, the *Almari Meteng* tradition may experience a shift in the form of implementation. Younger societies, exposed to social media and modern technology, tend to adopt more global values and practices. This can lead to reduced interest in local traditions that are considered ancient or no longer relevant. However, on the other hand, technology can also be used to document and promote these traditions to a wider audience, thereby increasing awareness and preservation. Modern education systems often prioritize rationality and knowledge, which may conflict with traditional beliefs and practices such as *Almari Meteng*. This may cause the younger generation to move further away from this tradition. Rapid urbanization causes many people to move from rural areas to cities. In urban environments, people may have difficulty maintaining these traditions due to differences in social and economic environments. In urban contexts, community values are often replaced by individualism, which can reduce the social cohesion necessary to carry out these traditions. Life in a busy and busy city may not allow for rituals that take time and require special preparation such as *Almari Meteng*. This can cause this tradition to become less common or only done in a shorter and simpler form.

The *Almari Meteng* tradition can survive by adapting to changing times. For example, modifying rituals to adapt to the context of modern life or integrating new elements that are relevant to the younger generation. In the face of modernization and urbanization, there is a tendency for the revival of cultural identity where people are looking for ways to return to their cultural roots as a form of resistance to global cultural homogenization. This could be an opportunity to maintain the *Almari Meteng* tradition by emphasizing its importance as part of the local cultural heritage that must be preserved.

The theory of symbolic interactionism, pioneered by George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer, emphasizes how individuals create meaning through social interaction. In the context of *Almari Meteng*: This tradition can be seen as a symbol of the sacredness of marriage, where every action and symbol involved in the wedding ritual has a certain social meaning. For example, the act of delaying sexual intercourse during the first pregnancy may be seen as a symbol of compliance with cultural and social norms that are considered important by the community (Blumer, 1969).

Victor Turner developed ritual theory with a focus on the concepts of liminality and community. Rituals are a way to strengthen social solidarity through transformative shared experiences (Turner, 1969). The *Almari Meteng* tradition can be seen as a liminal ritual in which couples experience a transition from one social status to another (for example, from prospective parents to parents). During this period, there are certain rules that must be obeyed, which creates a sense of togetherness (community) among those who carry out the tradition.

Based on the concept of Habitus according to Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1990) The *Almari Meteng* tradition can be analyzed as part of society's habitus, where actions

related to this tradition are considered a natural part of social life. People follow these traditions not only because they are imposed by social norms, but also because they have internalized these values as part of their identity.

While the "*Almari Meteng*" tradition can be seen as a form of social control that reinforces patriarchal power, it is also important to consider how women may also use this tradition as a form of negotiation or resistance to social norms (Crenshaw, 1989). In some cases, women may utilize these traditions to gain social legitimacy and protection for themselves and their children. This shows that women are not always passive in facing patriarchal norms, but can also take an active role in directing their lives, even in a context that is very limited by social norms.

The *Almari Meteng* tradition, a Javanese cultural practice, has several important practical implications in a social and cultural context: The importance of family and community, instilling values and norms and preserving culture. The practice of *Almari Meteng* is one way to preserve Javanese cultural heritage. This gives the younger generation the opportunity to understand and continue the traditions of their ancestors, maintaining the continuity of cultural identity amidst the current of modernization. From an economic point of view, *Almari Meteng* also reflects financial preparation. By holding off on purchasing items for the baby until the right time, families learn to manage finances wisely, save, and prepare for future needs. Through the theory of symbolic interactionism, this tradition can be seen as a way in which society gives symbolic meaning to everyday actions. Storing clothes in a cupboard is not only a physical act, but also a symbol of hope and prayer for the safety of mother and baby. Using Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus, *Almari Meteng* shows how daily habits and practices are shaped by larger social and cultural structures. This reflects how social norms regarding pregnancy and birth preparation are internalized by individuals within their social context. For Javanese women, following this tradition can influence the formation of their identity as mothers. This process integrates them into the social roles expected by society, shaping their self-perception in line with existing cultural norms.

Values

This tradition has important values that can be analyzed from a family education perspective. The following is a description of these values:

Value of Family Harmony

The *Almari Meteng* tradition usually involves all family members, both husband and wife. With the involvement of the extended family, this tradition teaches the importance of maintaining family harmony and togetherness. In the context of family education, this can be instilled as an important value in maintaining relationships between family members so that they are always harmonious and support each other.

The *Almari Meteng* tradition's emphasis on family harmony aligns closely with Bowen's Family Systems Theory (Bowen, 1993; Bowen & Kerr, 2009). This theory posits that families are interconnected emotional units where each member's actions affect the others. In the context of this tradition, the involvement of both immediate and extended family members in the ritual reinforces the systemic nature of family relationships. The collective participation in preparing the symbolic items for the

Almari Meteng not only strengthens family bonds but also demonstrates the interdependence that Bowen describes. This practice serves as a tangible manifestation of the family as an emotional unit, fostering a sense of togetherness and mutual support that extends beyond the nuclear family, thus embodying the core principles of Family Systems Theory.

Value of Respect for Parents and Ancestors

The Meteng cupboard also contains the value of respect for parents and ancestors. In this tradition, families often perform rituals and prayers addressed to their ancestors to ask for blessings and protection for pregnant women and their unborn babies. Family education can emphasize the importance of respect and appreciation for parents and ancestors as part of family culture and identity.

The respect for parents and ancestors inherent in the *Almari Meteng* tradition resonates with the Intergenerational Solidarity Theory proposed by Bengtson and Roberts (Bengtson & Roberts, 1991; Roberts et al., 1991). This theory identifies six dimensions of solidarity between generations, including affectual, associational, and normative solidarity. The ritual prayers and offerings to ancestors in the *Almari Meteng* tradition exemplify normative solidarity, reinforcing familial obligations and expectations. The emotional bonds strengthened through this shared experience reflect affectual solidarity, while the physical gathering of family members for the ritual demonstrates associational solidarity. By engaging in these practices, families not only honor their ancestors but also reinforce the intergenerational bonds that Bengtson and Roberts identify as crucial for family cohesion and continuity.

Values of Caring and Mutual Cooperation

Through this tradition, the family and surrounding community usually participate in helping with the preparation and implementation of the ritual. This value of mutual cooperation and caring is very important in family education, where children are taught to help each other and care for others, especially in the context of family and community.

The mutual cooperation aspect of the *Almari Meteng* tradition can be understood through the lens of Coleman's Social Capital Theory (1988). Coleman posits that social capital exists in the relations among persons, facilitating certain actions. In the context of this tradition, the communal effort in preparing for and executing the ritual builds and reinforces social networks within the family and community. The shared responsibility and collective action in assembling the symbolic items for the *Almari Meteng* create a form of social capital that can be drawn upon in times of need. This process not only strengthens immediate familial bonds but also extends to the broader community, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual support that aligns with Coleman's concept of social capital as a resource embedded in social relations.

Spiritual and Religious Values

The *Almari Meteng* tradition is also full of spiritual and religious values. The ritual process carried out aims to pray for safety and smooth running for the mother and unborn child. It is important to instill these religious values in the family so that

children have an understanding and appreciation of the religious teachings adhered to by the family.

The spiritual dimension of the *Almari Meteng* tradition can be analyzed through Fowler's Spiritual Development Theory (J. Fowler & Hennessey, 1976; J. W. Fowler, 1981; Shafranske, 1996). Fowler proposes stages of faith development, emphasizing how individuals progress in their understanding and experience of spirituality. The rituals and prayers associated with the *Almari Meteng* tradition provide a context for spiritual growth and understanding within families. As family members participate in these practices, they engage in what Fowler would describe as 'symbolic thinking,' where the items in the *Almari Meteng* take on deeper spiritual meanings. This process can facilitate movement through Fowler's stages, particularly from the 'Mythic-Literal' to the 'Synthetic-Conventional' faith, as participants begin to reflect on the symbolic significance of the tradition beyond its literal aspects.

The Value of Gender Education

In this tradition, there is often symbolization and teaching about gender roles, especially in the context of the role of pregnant mothers. Family education can take advantage of this moment to teach the importance of women's role in the family, as well as a fair division of tasks and responsibilities between husband and wife.

Eagly's Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1997, 2013; Eagly et al., 2000; Eagly & Wood, 2012) provides a valuable framework for examining the gender aspects of the *Almari Meteng* tradition. This theory posits that social roles, particularly gender roles, are shaped by the division of labor and societal expectations. In the context of this tradition, the specific roles assigned to men and women during the preparation and execution of the ritual reflect and potentially reinforce traditional gender expectations. However, it also offers an opportunity for families to discuss and potentially challenge these roles. The tradition's focus on the pregnant mother's role, for instance, can be used to highlight the importance of maternal health and the supportive role of fathers, potentially leading to a more balanced view of parental responsibilities that aligns with evolving social norms.

Value Health and Wellbeing

Almari Meteng is also closely related to aspects of maternal and baby health. Families are taught to pay attention to the health of pregnant women, both physically and mentally. In family education, this can be implemented by emphasizing the importance of maintaining the health of mothers and children through healthy lifestyles, regular check-ups, and emotional support from the family.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (Ryan, 2001) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how the *Almari Meteng* tradition influences maternal and child health. This theory emphasizes the interplay between an individual and their environment across multiple levels. The tradition's focus on the health of the pregnant woman and unborn child operates at the microsystem level, directly influencing family practices around prenatal care. The involvement of extended family and community members in the ritual extends this influence to the mesosystem, creating a supportive network for maternal health. Furthermore, the tradition's persistence over time demonstrates how cultural practices at the

macrosystem level can shape health behaviors and attitudes, illustrating the complex interplay between cultural traditions and health outcomes that Bronfenbrenner's theory articulates.

Value of Children's Education

Through this tradition, children in the family can also learn about the culture and traditions passed down by their ancestors. Family education can utilize this tradition as a means of instilling a sense of love and appreciation for local culture, as well as building a strong self-identity in children.

The role of the *Almari Meteng* tradition in children's education can be understood through the lens of Cultural Transmission Theory, as proposed by Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman (Cavalli-Sforza & Feldman, 1981; Chen et al., 1982). This theory explains how cultural information, including values, beliefs, and practices, is passed from one generation to the next. The *Almari Meteng* tradition serves as a vehicle for vertical transmission, where parents and older family members directly pass on cultural knowledge to children. By participating in or observing the ritual, children learn about their cultural heritage, family values, and social norms. This process of cultural transmission not only educates children about specific traditions but also helps in forming their cultural identity and understanding of their place within the family and community. The multi-generational nature of the tradition also facilitates oblique transmission, where children learn from non-parental adults, further enriching their cultural education.

To conclude, the *Almari Meteng* tradition embodies a rich tapestry of values that are integral to family education and cultural preservation. Through the lenses of various theoretical frameworks - from Bowen's Family Systems Theory to Cavalli-Sforza and Feldman's Cultural Transmission Theory - we can appreciate the multifaceted significance of this practice. It fosters family harmony, reinforces intergenerational respect, promotes mutual cooperation, nurtures spiritual growth, addresses gender roles, emphasizes health and wellbeing, and facilitates cultural education for children. These aspects collectively contribute to the holistic development of family members and the continuity of cultural heritage. As modernization challenges traditional practices, understanding the depth and breadth of the *Almari Meteng* tradition's impact on family dynamics and societal structures becomes crucial. This analysis not only highlights the tradition's importance in maintaining social cohesion and cultural identity but also demonstrates its adaptability in addressing contemporary family education needs. Moving forward, preserving and adapting such traditions may prove vital in balancing cultural heritage with evolving societal norms, ensuring that valuable familial and societal values continue to be transmitted to future generations.

4. CONCLUSION

This research reveals that the *Almari Meteng* tradition in Mancon Village, Wilangan District, Nganjuk Regency, possesses rich symbolic meanings that remain relevant in the context of modern family education. Each element of this tradition, such as the wardrobe, coconut, banana, and rice, symbolizes important values like responsibility, strength of principles, harmony, and fertility in family life. Analysis

through various theoretical frameworks demonstrates how this tradition contributes to strengthening family bonds, transmitting cultural values, and shaping social identity.

Despite facing challenges from modernization and urbanization, the *Almari Meteng* tradition exhibits adaptability to contemporary contexts. Preservation strategies involve modifying rituals to increase relevance for younger generations, utilizing technology for documentation and promotion, and integrating traditional values with modern education. This tradition continues to play a significant role in reinforcing social cohesion, transmitting cultural values across generations, and providing a framework for negotiating gender roles within a changing cultural context. Thus, *Almari Meteng* serves not only as a means of preserving cultural heritage but also as an effective instrument of family education in addressing the challenges of modern life.

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