

Exploration of the Indonesian Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* educational values: The foundation of character education

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ABSTRACT

Character is a crucial aspect of living in society. Character building has been carried out in Indonesia from hundred years ago. The people have improved their way of life by adopting local culture's educational values, such as the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'*. However, in this era, there is a deterioration of student character as a result of losing *Siri'* cultural ideals that are rarely found in the field of education. The study aimed to explore the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* educational values as the foundation of character building. This study was designed as a qualitative study using the ethno-pedagogy approach. The data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation and analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results have revealed that the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* contains the following educational values: *teppe* (faith), *pesse* (compassion), *lempuk* (honesty, straightening deeds, and intentions), *sipakatau* (humanizing human), *sipakalebbe* (glorification of human), *sipakainge* (reminding each other), *sipatokkong* (mutual help and mutual support), *tongeng* (sincerity), *reso* (hard work), and *abbulosibatang* (collaboration). In conclusion, the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* educational values play a crucial role in character education to be integrated into the learning process to improve student character.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of science and technology in the industrial revolution 4.0 era is inversely proportional to the degradation of morals among youth, marked by many young generations mired in a dark world [1]. This issue also permeates the structure of people's lives in Indonesia, especially education [2], [3]. The crisis of character not only occurs in Indonesia but has also become an international concern [4]–[6]. Therefore, to respond to the problem, Indonesia's education system needs a novelty movement specially designed to equip students with character values' inculcation [7], [8].

Character is a way of thinking and behaving that characterizes an individual [9]. Honorable characters are seen as being able to direct and influence a person or a group of people to professionally carry out activities [10], [11]. This is in line with previous studies [12]–[14], who states that the cultivation of character values enables him/her to perform positive deeds. Character is the foundation of a nation, empowering the people to face national and global development and challenges [15]. Therefore, the character must be built in the citizens through character education. However, modernization has brought student character changes [16], especially of those in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

A learning method that is confined to cognitive growth, therefore disregarding the development of the affective domain or student attitudes, leads to student character crisis or poor character [17]. Educators in Indonesia have similarly struggled to incorporate cultural values into the teaching process [18], [19]. Furthermore, Indonesia's education system, which is often partial, lessens the emphasis on fostering cultural values in the classrooms, resulting in students who do not comprehend and respect local cultural values [2]. Educators and students are unable to grasp and respect local cultural values due to a lack of understanding of the benefits of educational principles found in culture, despite the fact that these values have a significant role in education, especially in character education [20]–[24].

This character crisis is widely reported on social media, news broadcasting stations, and other sources of information, where students are described as having negative behavior such as lying about class attendance, brawling between students, doing sex before marriage, committing sexual harassment, cheating on the exam, stealing, and behaving rudely or impolitely to older people [3], [16], [18], [25]–[27]. The anarchic behavior of students in staging rallies, fighting within members of faculties, and inciting fights with professors exemplifies the character issue among Makassar City students. In the sphere of education in Indonesia, these actions are deemed immoral. If this situation persists, it is believed that the quality of Indonesia's human resources would suffer in the future. Therefore, we require a suitable solution to solve these character problems. One answer to Indonesia's character dilemma is the incorporation of local cultural values into education [16], [20], [22], [28].

The role and influence of cultural values on education should not be separated [23]. The world education institution, UNESCO, in 2003, emphasized the importance of integrating culture in instructional materials. Several studies have discussed the implementation of culture-integrated education. For instance, Kazakhstan's education has succeeded in incorporating cultural values in learning [29]. Also, Akib [30] has revealed that the educational values delivered by a culture can contribute to student development. Cultural values play a crucial role in education globally and education in Indonesia [31]. There is a wide range of educational values that can be introduced by cultures in Indonesia. For instance, the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* from South Sulawesi contains educational values integrated into learning.

Siri' is the primary Makassar-Buginese culture, which means shame or self-respect of someone who always tries to be better. Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* has been used as a character-building strategy since 1373 [32]. The Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* has an abstract concept, but the effects are real. In the Makassar-Buginese *Lontara* script that has existed for hundreds of years, it is written that *Siri'* can strengthen characters such as self-confidence, honesty, work ethic, and spirituality [33]. Abbas [34] states that the embodiment of this culture's concept can provide a driving force for someone to achieve better. Although *Siri'* has been known for a long time in Makassar, *Siri's* cultural values have not been optimally applied in Indonesian classrooms. *Siri's* educational values have not been studied in-depth, so information about these values is still very limited. Past studies rarely explore the values that can be learned from the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'*. In contrast, the values are used as the basis for shaping the character of students in Indonesia.

The explanation demonstrates the importance of investigating educational values in the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* that may be implemented into learning. The incorporation of these principles is one of the tactics used in Indonesia to form and improve the character of the pupils. This study aimed and was focused on finding the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* educational qualities that may be utilized in the classroom to enhance character education. This study can also benefit to restore the existence of the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* cultural values, which have been lost and are now practically extinct owing to the rapid changes of the times. Furthermore, the educational values contained in the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* culture can provide educators and students with knowledge and understanding of the role and function of these values during the learning process, as well as acting as a filter to prevent damage to the character of students in Indonesia.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Type of the study

This study was designed as a qualitative study using the ethno-pedagogy approach [35]. The ethno-pedagogy approach was applied to obtain data on the educational values in the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* that can be used to improve student character. In short, the purpose of this study was to explore the cultural values contained in the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* from South Sulawesi, Indonesia.

The exploration stage of educational values in the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* was carried out by: i) Tracing information about the educational values contained in the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* through reference studies of printed and electronic media; ii) Conducting interviews, observing and directly processing documentation in the field to collect data; and iii) Selecting relevant exploration findings that are applicable for analysis and for the foundation of character building in the classroom.

2.2. Participants

The participants of this study were selected using a purposive sampling technique followed by snowball sampling. The informants consisted of sixth cultural practitioners of *Siri'* and five officers from the South Sulawesi Cultural Value Conservation Center, under the Ministry of Education and Culture's supervision. Also, eight educational practitioners (three from middle schools and five from universities) and nine public figures from Makassar-Buginese possess extensive knowledge of *Siri'*s. To obtain more accurate data, the informants should come from three great ancient kingdoms in Makassar (1500-1900) that have upheld *Siri'* for generations, such as the Kingdom of Bone, Gowa, and Luwu.

2.3. Instrument

The interview was used as a method to explore the educational values of *Siri'*. There were four main questions prepared for the interview with the informants. The four main questions used in the interview covered *Siri'*s history and philosophy, the educational values contained in *Siri'*, the strategies to inculcate *Siri'* in Buginese society, and *Siri'*s role as a tool to support character education in school. The questions were then developed as the interview ran to elicit more in-depth information from the informants.

2.4. Data collection

The data of this study were gathered through interviews, observation, and documentation. The interview was performed with the informants to explore information on the values contained in *Siri'* culture. Meanwhile, the observation was conducted to identify the cultural heritage of *Siri'* that can be found in museums, traditional houses, or in communities. The documents collected were the *Lontara* ancient manuscripts on which *Siri'* educational values were written. Besides, an in-depth library study was also conducted to gather more data on the values.

2.5. Data analysis

The data were analyzed using the techniques suggested by Miles and Huberman [36]. The data analysis consisted of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data validation was conducted by integrating the interview results, observation, and document analyses (triangulation) [37]. The interpretation result would provide information on the educational values in the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* that can be integrated into learning.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A character crisis in Makassar City can be resolved by incorporating knowledge of educational values inherent in the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* into the learning process. However, these educational values must be thoroughly researched, analyzed, and examined in order to obtain proper values for empowering students' personalities through the learning process. The following section contains an explanation of the examination of *Siri'* educational values.

3.1. The cultural history of Makassar-Buginese *Siri'*

Since 1373, the educational values contained in the Buginese *Siri'* have been highly respected and used as the main foundation of the formation of a person's character. However, these cultural values started to gain prominence among the Makassar-Buginese society in the 1500s. *Siri'* refers to the feeling of shame or pride developed in a person. It is seen as one of the aspects of the Makassar-Buginese culture that contains life educational values. In terms of social institutions, *Siri'* is one of the elements of an ancient culture native to South Sulawesi (Makassar-Buginese society), which marks the pinnacle of culture in the area.

Siri' comprises the ancestors' life experiences that can be used as the foundation of life. Mattulada [33] states that *Siri'* is a translation of the ancestors' beliefs, thoughts, speech, and behavior passed down to their children and grandchildren. The educational values contained in *Siri'* used to be practiced by the people in the ancient kingdom areas, namely Bone, Gowa, and Luwu. These people strongly upheld and used the values as the foundation or guide for life.

The educational values contained in *Siri'* are written in old manuscripts that have existed a hundred years ago. These manuscripts are read as *pappaseng* or messages on character education from the Makassar-Buginese ancestors to their descendants. The *pappaseng* is written in *Lontara* script, an old alphabetical system used by the ancient Makassar-Buginese people [33]. *Lontara* script is five among 11 languages that still exist in Indonesia. The rest of the ancient languages have become extinct because they are no longer spoken or preserved by any speakers. As the languages diminished, the cultures in the areas also disappeared with the times.

3.2. Cultural philosophy of Siri' Makassar-Buginese

Siri' is a culture from Makassar-Buginese that refers to the feeling of shame and pride developed in someone that encourages him/her to achieve better in life [32]. The values contained in *Siri'* serve as the philosophy of life of the Makassar-Buginese people. *Siri'* is a sacred word. Someone who has lost his/her *Siri'* or *de'ni gaga siri'na*, is no longer human. In the community, they will be seen as animals or *sirupai olo' kolo'e*. An old saying from Makassar-Buginese, *siri'mi narituo*, explains that humans live because of shame. *Siri'* can also be defined as a non-greedy attitude towards worldly life [38].

The educational values contained in *Siri'* are useful in shaping the character of a person. These values are able to touch a person's mind and heart, motivating him/her to engage in beneficial activities [39]. The spirit of *Siri'* educational values is a self-esteem bet that is raised through hard work, achievement, pioneering spirit and quality life goals. For the tertiary level students, *Siri'* enables them to uphold humanity's principles while achieving a high work ethic and competing with anyone [30].

In several of the interview sessions, mentioned the following three types of *Siri'*. First, *siri' masiri'*, containing the spirit to improve, maintain or achieve something that can contribute to society. Second, *siri' matesiri'*, *siri' matesiri'*, associated with faith. The Makassar-Buginese society believes that people who lose their *Siri'* will no longer feel shame or, in other words, will become faithless. These people are often regarded as “zombies” who are despicable and unworthy of respect. Third, *siri' mappakkasiri'-siri'*, associated with self-esteem. There is an old saying famous among the Makassar-Buginese society. It says, “work diligently, to uplift the family's dignity, never beg, because it only brings shame to the family”. *Siri' mappakasiri' siri'* can prevent someone from doing actions that are against the law, moral values, religion, customs, and other activities that can harm humans and humanity itself.

Siri' from Makassar-Buginese provides a clear picture that students must always have strong intentions and never achieve life goals. *Siri'* is similar to Bushido from Japan, which features three work ethics influencing success: trust, discipline, and quality. These work ethics have been preserved by the Japanese knights since Shogun Tokugawa Tsunayoshi, allowing them to build fine character. Later, these work ethics were adopted by the Japanese education system [40]. The learning process that is conducted with precise determination and compliance to the applicable rules helps shape student character [41]. According to Kisby [42], good behavior or character emerges from good habits. Therefore, educational institutions have to pay careful attention to character education at every level of education.

3.3. The educational values of Siri' as the foundation of human character in Makassar-Buginese

As the product of culture, *Siri's* educational values can stand-alone or implied on *pappaseng*. The values contained in *pappaseng* are regarded as the most beneficial teachings from the Makassar-Buginese ancestors. One *pappaseng* can contain some educational values or life teachings. *Siri's* educational values as the foundation of human character in Makassar are described in the following sections.

3.3.1. Spirituality

Spirituality is one character that serves as the foundation of human life. Since a long time ago, the Makassar-Buginese people have believed in God's existence as the Creator of life, *Dewatae* or *Puangnge*. The spiritual values contained in *Siri'* are mostly focused on the belief in the Creator of life. This belief has existed since hundreds of years ago and is written in *Lontara* as presented in Figure 1.

The *pappaseng* shows that the Makassar-Buginese society will never change their beliefs no matter what. Life difficulties will only be regarded as a test of faith; this is known as being *teppe* or faithful. According to previous researchers [43]–[45], spiritual values are the basis of human development. The process of cultivating spiritual values in a person should be done by getting him/her used to practice this spirituality [46], [47]. This habit can be cultivated in students through spiritual activities, such as praying and giving thanks for the Creator's Majesty [48], [49]. Spiritual activities can create a peace-loving and calm atmosphere in the classroom.

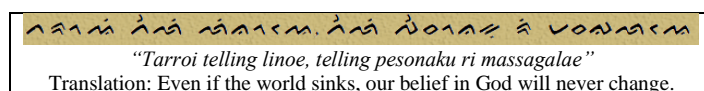


Figure 1. *Lontara pappaseng* on spirituality

3.3.2. Honesty

Honesty is the necessary foundation in carrying out relationships with fellow humans. It is impossible to create good relationships among humans without honesty [39]. In various contexts, the word

honest is associated with goodness because goodness arises from honesty. The Creator and their fellow humans love honest people. Actions that are sincere and kind will be reciprocated, enjoyed by the children or offspring of that person [50]. The *pappaseng* representing the values of honesty as can be seen in Figure 2.

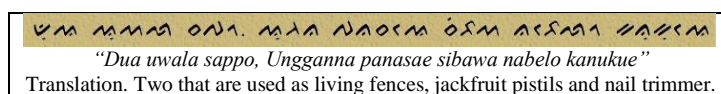


Figure 2. *Lontara pappaseng* on honesty

The *pappaseng* is a message about honesty. Jackfruit pistils or *lempu* represent honesty and nail trimmer or *nabelo kuku* symbolizes purity in the Makassar-Buginese culture. Honesty is believed as the fortress that protects a person from impurity [51]. Berkowitz and Bier [52] argue that honesty is the foundation of life; someone can achieve success when s/he can instill honest values in their life consistently. In general, honesty in education describes how to think and behave in a social order in education [53].

3.3.3. Unity

Unity values include solidarity and cooperation. The main aspect of unity is togetherness in collaboration or *abbulosibatang*. *Abbulosibatang* can occur if each group member applies the 4S, namely *sipakatau* (humanization), *sipakalebbi* (glorification of human), *sipakainge* (mutual reminding), and *sipatokkong* (mutual help and mutual support). The Makassar-Buginese people believe that collaboration helps solve every problem. This is in line with the *pappaseng* written on the following *Lontara* (Figure 3).

The educational values of the Buginese *Siri'* from Makassar written on the *pappaseng abbulosibatang* organize and influence the way people establish relationships with their fellow humans, both individually or in groups, to create harmonious life [54]. Collaboration among students in the classroom helps them solve problems and achieve mutual goals [55]. Implementing *abbulosibatang* in learning helps students develop a sense of tolerance, national spirit, social care, independent communication, curiosity, respect for achievement, peace-loving attitude, care for the environment, and responsibility.

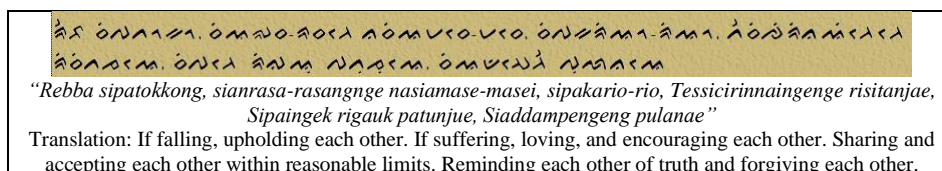


Figure 3. *Lontara pappaseng* on unity

3.3.1. Courage

Courage or *masegge* is one of the knight's qualities taught in *Siri'*. Courage is the attitude of not being afraid to do a job, whether difficult or easy. It also refers to courage to learn even though it's tiring, the courage to express opinions loudly or softly, the courage to speak modestly but meaningfully, the courage to make difficult and easy decisions according to the truth, and courage to uphold justice and advice others about politeness [51]. *Pappaseng* in Makassar-Buginese culture symbolizes courage. The *Lontara* manuscript that contains *Siri'*'s educational values can be seen in Figure 4.

The Makassar-Buginese community believes that the courage to defend the truth and do good is part of a social being's self-development process. A person's courage makes him more trustworthy. The sense of courage taught in *Siri'*'s culture can also be associated with patriotism, nationalism, social care, peace-loving attitude, reading habit, tolerance, and responsibility. The integration of this cultural value into learning will help shape students' character who are quality and useful in education.

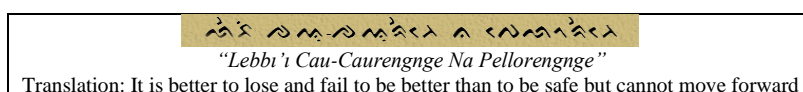


Figure 4. *Lontara of pappaseng* about courage

3.3.2. Work ethics

One of the work ethics or *reso* practiced by the Makassar-Buginese people is working hard because they believe that the Creator's grace can be poured only with hard work. Effort and determination to achieve goals must be sustained in any situation. One of the *Lontara pappaseng* that symbolizes work ethics can be seen in Figure 5.

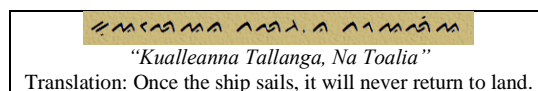


Figure 5. *Lontara pappaseng* on work ethics

The *pappaseng* words on work ethics imply that one must be committed to completing it in doing something. Confidence and sincerity in work or *tongeng* are the keys to success [49], [50]. In the learning process, work ethics can affect students' discipline, creativity, independence, curiosity, and sense of responsibility.

Explicitly, the results of the exploration show that the educational values contained in the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* consist of *teppe*, *pesse*, *lempuk*, *sipakatau*, *sipakalebbi*, *sipakainge*, *sipatokkong*, *tongeng*, *reso*, and *abbulosibatang*. Educational values that can stand alone or in the form of *Pappaseng* include more than one life lesson and various principles for character development. Educational principles contained in the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* can serve as a foundation for character development for Indonesian students, particularly in Makassar. Surprisingly, *Siri'* educational values can aid in the development of student character that is in line with the 18 character criteria established by the Ministry of Education, Republic of Indonesia. The Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* educational values that can influence character building can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* educational values for character education

Makassar-Buginese <i>Siri'</i> educational values	Character values
<i>Teppe</i> (faith)	Religious, peace-loving.
<i>Pesse</i> (compassion)	Tolerant, peace-loving, caring for the environment
<i>Lempuk</i> (honesty)	Honest, discipline, responsible, democratic
<i>Sipakatau</i> and <i>sipakalebbi</i> (humanizing human and respect)	Religious, tolerant, independent, curious, respectful towards achievement, peace-loving, interested in reading, caring for the environment and society, responsible
<i>Sipakaingedan</i> and <i>sipatokkong</i> (reminding each other and helping each other)	Nationalistic, social care, peace-loving, communicative, curious
<i>Reso</i> and <i>tongeng</i> (hard work and sincerity)	Discipline, hard-working, creative, independent, curious, interested in reading, nationalistic, responsible
<i>Abbulosibatang</i> (cooperation)	Social care, peace-loving, nationalistic, patriotism, democratic, tolerant

3.4. The strategies to inculcate *Siri'* into Makassar-Buginese society

The inculcation of *Siri'* into Buginese society is done through *pappaseng*. *Pappaseng* is a collection of messages containing *Siri'* educational values inherited from the Buginese ancestors. The messages are written on *Lontara* script and passed down from generation to generation. They come in various forms, such as advice, ideas, noble thoughts, valuable soul experiences, and noble considerations about good and bad qualities that can guide character building and deal with various life problems [56], [57]. According to Sikki *et al.* [51], *pappaseng* is a binding will or testament, followed by the Makassar-Buginese people. *Pappaseng* has been used as guidance for the Buginese community to live harmoniously in a community both in their home and overseas. The existing life guidelines refer to various cultural value orientations, namely the teachings about life and how to have a relationship with God, fellow humans, oneself, the natural environment, and how to use resources responsibly.

The philosophy of life contained in *pappaseng* upholds the values of truth, wisdom, honor, patience, security, and faith in the Creator of life [58]. Besides, *pappaseng* always teaches about work determination, strategy and ethics. According to Abbas [34], *pappaseng* has been used to shape the Makassar-Buginese people's character for a long time. The educational values implied on *pappaseng* are useful to develop one's noble character [59].

According to several cultural scientists of the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* as an expert on *pappaseng*, a culture practitioner, has revealed three ways of delivering *pappaseng*: i) Through *Lontara* script reading. By

understanding the old manuscripts written in *Lontara*, people can realize *Siri's* educational values inherited from their ancestors; ii) Through oral communication, from the more senior people or society members. *Pappaseng* has been referred to Makassar-Buginese parents in educating their children to become human beings who can develop the feeling of shame towards God, other people, and themselves; iii) Through art performance. Art performance can be used as a medium to deliver *Pappaseng*. Story-telling is an effective way to teach the younger generation about the educational values contained in *Siri'* (Figure 6). Delivering *pappaseng* through art performance can support the formation of morals among youth. Besides, the use of art also facilitates adolescents' understanding and application of values in the culture [60].



Figure 6. Delivering *pappaseng* through story telling

3.5. The role of Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* in education

The integration of the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* in education can improve student character. The Buginese *Siri'* from Makassar is one of the ancient cultures of Indonesia. *Siri'* is not a mere culture; it is beyond that. *Siri'* contains educational values that can shape the character of good human beings [54]. The Makassar-Buginese people have integrated the educational values of *Siri'* into their day-to-day life since 1373. In line with Baehr [61], local wisdom values can be used as a medium through which character building can be achieved.

The results of analysis and interviews with officers in the Conservation Center for Cultural Values of South Sulawesi and education practitioners reveal that the educational values contained in the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* (*teppe*, *pesse*, *lempuk*, *sipakatau*, *sipakalebbi*, *sipakainge*, *sipatokkong*, *tongeng*, *reso*, and *abbulosibatang*) can be used to support character building and solve character crises. The integration of these educational values can be done by: i) Integrating the values into the curriculum at schools; ii) Mentioning the values in the learning tools (course outline, learning unit, and student worksheet) as a motivation guideline; iii) Integrating the values into learning strategies or models (syntax); iv) Integrating the values into learning resources such as student book, module, e-learning timeline (Google Classroom, Edmodo, Facebook, Moodle, Schoology) by adapting *pappaseng* writings; v) Implementing the values inside and outside the classroom to support character education.

The processes that occur at the five phases are the most important factors in the development of student character. According to Jamaluddin, *et al.* [18], character may be implanted gradually and habitually in students. The habit of doing the right thing responsibly will result in feeling ashamed of doing something against the nation's philosophy or ideology, religion, and culture [62]. This is in line with what the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* culture teaches about the character. People who perceive *Siri'* as the philosophy of life will bend over backward to implement *lempuk* (honesty, straightening deeds and intentions); *sipakatau* (humanization), *sipakalebbi* (glorification of human); *sipakainge* (mutual reminding); and *sipatokkong* (mutual help and mutual support) in life [63]. The implementation of cultural values in everyday life and in education gives someone a positive aura [23], [30], [64], [65]. The culture-based studies conducted in Indonesia also confirm this idea by stating that the educational values taught by a culture can have a positive effect on learning [2], [22], [31].

Character education based on ethno-pedagogy principles may positively impact on school climate as well as students' and educators' moral and behavior [1]. Hence, character education that is executed effectively will contribute to the environment [66], [67]. Similarly, Lickona [9] argues that human beings with good character can understand morals and perform moral behavior in society. Student character can be improved through appropriate ways [68]. Character building can be done by integrating cultural values into the learning process [2], [23], which can indirectly shape students' higher order thinking quality [69].

4. CONCLUSION

The educational values contained in the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* are *teppe*, *pesse*, *lempuk*, *sipakatau*, *sipakalebbe*, *sipakainge*, *sipatokkong*, *tongeng*, *reso*, and *abbulosibatang*. These values have been taught to the Makassar people in South Sulawesi for generations since 1373. *Siri'* is abstract in concept, but the effects are real. The values contained in *Siri'* should be applied in social life, workplace, or schools. The educational values in *Siri'* should be integrated into school curriculum, learning tools, learning strategies or models, learning resources or learning media.

The educational values taught by *Siri'* play a significant role in character education because they create a feeling of shame in someone and raise the awareness of becoming a noble human with good quality. Furthermore, the educational values contained in *Siri'* are in line with the character values suggested by the Indonesian Ministry of Education in character education. Therefore, the integration of *Siri'* educational values in learning is highly recommended, especially for improving student character in the future. Hence, the Makassar-Buginese *Siri'* educational values can also function as a filter to prevent damage to the character of students in Indonesia, particularly of students in Makassar.

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