

## Ngukok tradition; A smoking habit in Kubang village

Agustin Wela Sasih<sup>1</sup>, Azwar Ananda<sup>2</sup>, Afriva Khaidir<sup>3</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang - Indonesia, ([agustinwelasasih@yahoo.co.id](mailto:agustinwelasasih@yahoo.co.id))

### Abstract

Ngukok tradition is smoking habit performed by young boys on Idul Fitri and Idul Adha in Kubang village. On that day, boys with a happy feeling buying and smoking a cigarette. Their parents also allow their children to smoke. While children should be avoided from smoking habits because the childhood is the period to grow and develop. This research was aimed to describe the values in ngukok tradition. This research used qualitative approach. Research was conducted in Kubang Village, Depati VII District, Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province. Total informants were 31 people selected by using purposive sampling. The techniques of data collection were observation, interview, and documentation. The data were analysed by using Miles and Huberman analysis. The research findings revealed the values contained in Ngukok tradition. Social value, such as togetherness, solidarity, silaturahmi and mutual sharing. Religious value, such as expressing gratitude to God and fasting. Cultural value which is related to cultural inheritance.

**Keywords:** tradition, ngukok



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## Introduction

Culture is a whole system of ideas, actions, and works produced by human in the framework of community life, which is made human self by learning (Koentjaraningrat, 2011:72). Humans and culture are an inseparable unity because human being is a proponent of culture. Even if humans die, their culture will be passed on to their descendants (Poerwanto, 2005:50).

Humans are born and grown as the recipient of previous generation's culture which is known as tradition. Tradition includes everything in the form of customs, beliefs, and habits which later become the teachings and ideology and are inherited from generation to generation (Soetrisno, Kamus Populer Bahasa Indonesia). Tradition develops amidst the community and is performed by the community as a legacy of previous generations. This hereditary tradition or habit of a community has cultural value of the society that becomes the core of a culture (Koentjaraningrat, 1972:88).

Kubang Village is one of villages located in Depati VII District of Kerinci Regency in Jambi Province which has various hereditary traditions such as Ngukok tradition. Ngukok is a term by the people of Kubang Village which means smoking. Ngukok tradition is a smoking habit performed by 7-to-18-years-old boys on Idul Fitri and Idul Adha. This habit has been practiced by them since the past until now. This habit is one form of culture passed down from generation to generation from ancestors.

Geertz (1992: 3) states that culture is a pattern of historically passed-up meanings manifested in symbols that with humans communicate, preserve, and develop their knowledge of life. Geertz (Nursyam, 2007: 91) provides a cultural sense into two elements, namely culture as a system of meaning and culture as a value system. The system of meaning is the pattern of, while the value system is the pattern for. The pattern of cultural action is a set of human knowledge that contains models that are selectively used to interpret, encourage, and create actions or in other terms as guidelines for action. While the pattern for the action of culture is what is done and can be seen by everyday man as something real existence or in other sense as a form of action.

Based on the result from field observation, it was found that they joyfully celebrated the festivity of Idul Fitri and Idul Adha. The excitement was not only expressed by wearing new clothes but also shown by Ngukok (smoking) which was performed by the children. Parents and society gave their permission to the children to smoke as a form of their excitement in welcoming Islamic fests (Idul Fitri and Idul Adha). Their cigarette brands were the same as that used by the adults, such as Niko, Surya, Djisamsu, Sampoerna, Classmild and other brands. They could smoke anywhere for example in stalls, crowded place, roadside and other places. The people of Kubang Village still preserve and allow this tradition because it comprehends the values they believe.

However, in medical perception, smoking habit should be avoided because it can badly affect humans' health and decrease one's quality of life. As mentioned in 2015 data and information center of Health Ministry of Republic of Indonesia, lung cancer risk is 7.8 times greater in smokers than nonsmokers. Moreover, smoking also increases impotence risk up to 50%. In addition, the author also quotes from the article (Doll, 1998:87) explained that cigarette smoking has now been found to be positively associated with nearly 40 diseases or causes of death and to be negatively associated with eight or nine more. So, based on these findings then smoking should be avoided because it can lead to various diseases and deaths.

Especially for young children, as next generation they should be prevented from smoking habit. Childhood is a stage where children rapidly grow and develop and are vulnerable to risks that can disrupt their growth. One of those risks is smoking. If children are exposed to smoking habits will hamper their growth. Regarding this issue, Indonesian government has issued a policy to protect national young generation written in Regulation of the Government No 109/2012 concerning control of materials that contain addictive substances in tobacco products in the interest of health. It is mentioned that the protection of children and pregnant women against materials that contain addictive substances in tobacco products is integratedly and comprehensively implemented through prevention activities, physical and mental recovery and social recovery. In addition, Indonesian Government has also issued a policy in Article 67 of Law No. 35 Year 2014 concerning special protection for children who become the victims of the abuse of narcotics, alcohols, psychotropics, and other addictive substances.

While Indonesian Government seeks to protect the children from smoking habit, the people of Kubang Village at Depati VII District of Kerinci Regency in Jambi still preserve Ngukok tradition as the legacy of their ancestors. This tradition has been performed by the children on Islamic fests (Idul Fitri and Idul Adha). This tradition indirectly introduces cigarettes to boys.

There are several writings relevant to the Ngukok tradition research problem. First, Yasnita's (2018) Writing reveals the "Smoking Tradition in Portugal On the Feast of Divine Presence". Explaining that in a village called Vale de Salgueior, Portugal, parents encouraged their children to smoke, some of whom were five years old. Locals say the practice is a culture that has been going on for centuries. The local authorities also did not intervene to stop the practice. Smoking is done only by children only on holidays, after which they do not ask for more cigarettes.

The aim of this research study was to explore the smoking behavior of adult African male immigrant smokers living in Glasgow to inform and contribute to primary health promotion frameworks.

Second, the writings of Ezika (2014) writing reveals the “ explore the smoking behavior of adult African male immigrant smokers living in Glasgow”. Explaining that the participants' smoking habits were influenced by cold weather environment as well as societal norms that appear to make the smoking habit more acceptable in Glasgow than Africa. It appears the more educated the participants were, the fewer cigarettes they smoked. However, there was only a slight difference in the number of cigarettes smoked between participants with a degree and those with a postgraduate degree

In this case, there is a similarity between the problems of the writing above with the research to be studied. However, in this case the author tries to describe value contained in Ngukok tradition. Based on this phenomenon, the authors feel the need to examine Ngukok tradition. Because children should be avoided from smoking or cigarettes because they can affect their development. Therefore this research aims to describe the value of what is contained in Ngukok tradition so as to be able to convince his supporters to maintain Ngukok tradition in Kubang Village, Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province.

## Method

This research used qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is an approach that try to obtain descriptive data in the form of written and oral words from informants and observed behaviors (Moleong, J. Lexy, 1994:6). the qualitative research enabled the researcher to reveal the reality in the field as it was. So, the information about the values in Ngukok tradition was in the form of utterances and narratives and directly collected from the informants in Kubang Village.

This study was conducted at Kubang Village, Depati VII District in Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province. The selection of informants in this research conducted by purposive sampling, a technique where the researcher intentionally chose the informants by herself (Bungin, Burhan, 2010:81). The criteria of informants that researchers set is (1) Members of the community who have long been integrated with Ngukok tradition in Kubang Village. (2) Community leaders of Kubang Village who know the social and cultural condition of Kubang Village (3) Boys who are involved in Ngukok tradition in Kubang Village. Techniques of data collection were observation, interview, and documents study. The data was processed by using interactive analysis model which proposed by Miles and Hubberman (1992:20). The analysis followed three procedures: (a) Data reduction, (b) data presentation, and (c) conclusion. To ensure the research data validity, the researcher referred to the use of data standard explained by Lyncoln and Guba which consists of: (1) Credibility, (2) Transferability, (3) Dependability, and (4) Confirmability.

## Results and Discussion

Geertz (1992: 3) which states that culture is a pattern of historically transmitted meanings embodied in symbols, a system of concepts inherited and implied in symbolic forms that with human communicating, preserving and developing knowledge they are about life.

*Ngukok* tradition that is implemented in the community of Kubang Village is a habit that has been hereditary because it has its own meaning and value for the people in Kubang Village. Its implementation begins with the interpretation of its former supporters, and is reflected through practices or activities related to that tradition.

Findings from the field showed that there were three values contained in *Ngukok* tradition.

1. Social value is the value a person implements in interacting with others or the environment. Togetherness, solidarity, silaturahmi, and mutual sharing were clearly manifested when the children performed the tradition. The children could improve their togetherness and solidarity between them through *Ngukok* (smoking) together. Based on the observations, the authors saw they were smoking cigarettes together while telling stories, exchanging thoughts and joking.  
Thus, Through smoking they could create nice atmosphere and feel closer to each other. In addition, through *Ngukok* (smoking) can also increase silaturahmi among them. Some of the children were those who were back to their hometown and they rarely met each other. When there is smoking behavior during Idul Fitri and Idul Adha, they can reunite their *silaturahmi*. Besides that there is also a shared attitude, which they are taught to share with their friends. They will give a cigarette to his friend if there is one of his friends do not have a cigarette at that day. In other words, the local people were trying to maintain the social value for their lives especially for children.
2. Religious value is the teachings of life from God that should be practiced by humans. In this case, the children were taught about religious values by their parents through the *Ngukok* tradition. First is children are taught expressing gratitude to Allah. What the local people believed was that in Idul Adha and Idul Fitri they were taught to really enjoy God's grace in the form of freedom, success and happiness after a full month of fasting. So also with children, they express their gratitude with an outburst of excitement and they are given the freedom to vent their excitement including by smoking. Other than that value, parents also taught their children about fasting obligation. Permission to smoke in Idul Adha and Idul Fitri by their parents was a reward for the children if they are willing to perform the fast. According to parents in Kubang Village, in general, the children were very unwilling to fast. So parents used *Ngukok* as an enticement for children to fast. When children get permission to smoke at holiday, they must be willing to perform fasting (Interview with Mr. Ibrahim, 02 November 2017).
3. Other than social and religious values, there is also cultural value in *Ngukok* tradition. Some informants said that cultural value in *Ngukok* is local people's responsibility in preserving the culture that has been inherited by their ancestors and their inclination to inherit the culture to the next generation. Although outsiders count it as a deviant behavior, the local people do not mind the tradition since its cultural values have been embedded within them. According to them, these values are used as guidelines which must be followed by the children in their daily lives.

Geertz (Nursyam, 2007: 91) provides a cultural sense into two elements, namely culture as a system of meaning and culture as a value system. The system of meaning is a set of human knowledge that contains models that are selectively used to interpret, and create action. Whereas the value system is what everyday human beings can and can see as something real or in the other sense as a form of action.

*Ngukok* habit performed by boys in Kubang Village is a form of action that has values as a guide of action. Herimanto (2011: 101) states value is something that is abstract as a guide and general principles in acting and behaving. The attachment of people or groups to values is very strong and even emotional. Therefore it can be seen as the purpose of human life itself.

Every culture in a community must convey some values since it has been hereditary inherited and preserved by its community and used as guideline in lives so that they can distinguish the good from the bad. A behavior or tradition survive in a society because people believe in the values contained in it. Those values that serve as guidelines are rationally and factually difficult to explain since they only exist in one's mind.

If from childhood someone has been exposed by those values and they are embedded within his/her self, she/he will need a long time to replace them with other values. That is what happened to the people of Kubang Village who still maintain Ngukok tradition until now. They believe that the values contained in the tradition are important and useful for their lives especially for children.

## Conclusions

According to findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that the people of Kubang Village still maintain *Ngukok* tradition because they believe in the values in the tradition. Although outsiders consider it as a deviant behavior, the people of Kubang Village see it as normal thing because its values has been embedded within them that make it difficult to erase this tradition. As for the values contained in *Ngukok* tradition, there are social value, religious value and cultural value. They believe that these values are very important and useful for everyday lives especially for children's.

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